

COPYRIGHT WARNING

Notice: warning concerning copyright restrictions

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

7.5.66
no. 16

GRACE IN THE WRITINGS OF
WILLIAM FAULKNER

by

David A. Hockensmith

A Thesis submitted to
The Faculty of Episcopal Theological School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

Cambridge, Massachusetts
1966

Accepted by the faculty of Episcopal Theological
School in partial fulfillment of the require-
ments for the Bachelor of Divinity degree.

Director of Thesis

13 April, 1966

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my thanks to Dr. Alan L. Lebowitz of the English faculty of Harvard University. Had it not been for one very fruitful discussion, I might not have had the courage to express several opinions in writing in this thesis. None of the blame for errors, however, may be traced to this discussion. Special thanks are also due those members of the faculty of Episcopal Theological School who so graciously offered help when it was requested.

David A. Hockensmith

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION: THEOLOGY AND LITERATURE IN DIALOGUE	1
II. "CALVINISM" AND ADVERSE FORCES IN FAULKNER'S CORPUS	10
III. POSITIVE FORCES: ENDURING AND PREVAILING .	43
IV. CONCLUSION: GRACE IN FAULKNER'S CHARACTERS	69
BIBLIOGRAPHY	94

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THEOLOGY AND LITERATURE IN DIALOGUE

Modern literature and Christianity have often battled more than they have sought to find common ground. An apparently crass and unbelieving world which is depicted in much modern literature has offended conservative Christian readers. In an attempt at 'Christian' criticism they immediately disclaim the world of modern art and attempt to judge it in the light of a more worthy 'Christian' estimation of the world. William Faulkner's world is quite often a very ugly and unpleasant one. A lady of great stature, Edith Hamilton, was affected thus by Faulkner's presentation of life:

Mr. Faulkner's novels are about ugly people in an ugly land. There is no beauty anywhere. Whether he deliberately excludes it or does not perceive it, no one can say; but at least he says himself that a blossoming pear tree in the moonlight looks like hair streaming up from the head of a drowned woman, each hair distinct in the water from the others.¹

Nathan Scott admirably sums up the feelings of many Christians about modern art:

There are many religious people who suppose their own conservative and unaroused attitudes toward modern life to be based upon valid Christian principles, when they really derive from a protected social situation in which it has been possible for them to shut their eyes to the dislocations of the age to which history has committed both them and ourselves. They face with defensiveness and hostility much of modern literature in which these stresses and strains are reflected.²

It seems a more sophisticated rendition of this same unfriendliness to the modern arts arises out of the disjunctions between the natural order and the order of revelation that are insisted upon by adherents of the so-called 'Crisis Theology.'³ But is this sentiment an adequate approach to the arts for a Christian? I think not. This judgmental method is in the tradition of what Professor Tillich would term 'heteronomy.'⁴ In our examination of literature, we must attempt to follow a more 'theonomous' method.

'Theonomy' has been defined as a culture in which the ultimate meaning of existence shines through all finite forms of thought and action; the culture is transparent, and its creations are vessels of a spiritual content.⁵

Christian thought cannot be divorced from culture. In fact, it is crucial in our time that theology be in dialogue with contemporary culture. Again, Professor Tillich is helpful when he describes theology.

But the task of theology is mediation, mediation between the eternal criterion of truth as it is manifest in the picture of Jesus as the Christ and the changing experiences of individuals and groups, their varying questions and their categories of perceiving reality. If the mediating task of theology is rejected, theology itself is rejected; for the term 'theo-logy' implies, as such, a mediation, namely, between the mystery, which is theos, and the understanding, which is logos.⁶

Theology's concern is the reality of the human condition, and literature is one of the chief vessels of expression of human concerns. "Good" literature must deal with what ultimately concerns men; "religion is ultimate concern."⁷ "Good" theology also expresses ultimate concern, if it is really religious. The task of the theologian consequently ~~must~~ be to examine the true meanings of contemporary culture, of which literature is a chief spokesman:

And since it is religion, in this sense, that is truly substantive in the various symbolic expressions of a culture, the task of criticism, in whatever medium it may be conducted, is, at bottom, that of deciphering the given work at hand in such a way as to reveal the ultimate concern which it implies. For, as he [Tillich] says, in the depth of every cultural creation 'there is an ultimate . . . and [an] all-determining concern, something absolutely serious,' even if it is expressed in what are conventionally regarded as secular terms.⁸

Theology and literature should have a common meeting ground in expression of ultimate concern. They are both part of a cultural concern which should be religious in the deepest sense of the word.

The religious nature of the literature itself should compel its critic finally to move beyond the level of verbal analysis to the theological valuation, a level closer to the ultimate concern of both the critic and of his material.⁹ When the critic uses his own values and judgments with which to view the literature, there must be some dialogue established between the reader and his literature. If the critic is Christian, he must view literature through a particular set of concerns. An English critic, the late S. L. Bethell, remarked:

. . . if he is a Christian worthy of the name, his whole outlook will be coloured by his religion; he will see life in Christian terms, and, though he may ignore an atheist writer's professed atheism, he will still judge his degree of insight into character by his own insight, which will have been formed in part by his Christian experience. And the non-Christian critic - let us be clear about this - will also judge a writer's insight into character (or into anything else, of course) by the standard of his own insight, however derived. There is no 'impartial criticism' in this sense, or rather there is no critical neutrality; these are only Christian critics and Marxist critics and Moslem critics.¹⁰

The "critic" writing in this work hopes that his outlook expresses Christian concerns. A major purpose of this undertaking is to establish a ground on which Christian thought may enter into dialogue with the literature of one of the most significant contemporary writers in our Western tradition.

The subject of grace is our particular area of concern, and we are endeavoring to ascertain whether there is any artistic expression of grace in Faulkner's writings with which we may enter into dialogue.

Faulkner writes in the Western Christian tradition, and whether he be Christian, agnostic, or atheist, he is bound to possess concerns which have been shaped by this tradition. These areas initially will form a meeting ground. Indeed it is often difficult to tell whether a modern writer can be termed a "Christian" or not; we will be more concerned with the major areas of concern expressed in Faulkner's art than with whether he himself is a "Christian." John McGill Krumm astutely remarks:

The distinction, however, between the explicitly Christian writer and the writer who does no more than pose the dilemma of the human situation is not a distinction that can be pressed too insistently nor maintained too sharply. The power to raise certain kinds of questions is in itself a fruit of a Christian culture.¹¹

Our task partially will be to see if the world depicted in Faulkner's writings is one in which grace is a valid concept, and if so, if grace is a vital concern of our author.

William Faulkner stands very much in a Christian tradition of thought. His novels are filled with allusions, symbols, and motifs which spring from the Christian tradition. We cannot allow ourselves to become bogged down in an

examination of relatively unimportant imagery or symbolism, just because it appears to be a product of a Christian tradition, just because the mention of Christ or of another Christian figure appears. We must rather examine those major motifs of the writings which appear to express the author's genuine concerns, which are rooted in the Christian tradition's concerns, and which are relevant to our particular area of examination in this thesis.

William Faulkner has written many novels and short stories. The question necessarily arises: Where in a writer's corpus does one look to find his material which is most relevant for a particular examination? Many "Christian" critics immediately look to Faulkner's later writings, thinking they see in his writings a movement to faith culminating in later works. In A Fable they see a moving modern retelling of the crucifixion and conclude that Faulkner has finally become a Christian of sorts. If we remain true to our purpose to enter into dialogue with the ultimate concerns expressed by Faulkner's writings, we cannot fall into this trap which some "Christian" critics have found. We must primarily look to those writings in which the writer's concerns are expressed in their most intensive and effective artistic form. In Faulkner's early period before 1933 we find the most creative and tension-filled works of his career. In

these works, his theological focus is keen; he expresses his genuine concerns in a dynamic artistic form. We would be deceiving ourselves if we looked to other works to find a theological center. It would be a method dishonest to our purpose if we were to look primarily to inferior later works, just because there we hope to find a more "Christian" Faulkner behind the art, a Faulkner more obsessed with muddled metaphysics. We must look to the best expression of Faulkner's art, to the best expression of his ultimate concerns. We concur with Allen Tate in his evaluation of Faulkner's works. He claims that Faulkner wrote at least five masterpieces - The Sound and the Fury, As I Lay Dying, Sanctuary, Light in August, and The Hamlet. Of these first four titles, none appeared after 1932; The Hamlet was published in 1940. Tate maintains that Faulkner wrote only one bad novel, A Fable, "conceived in theological ignorance and placed in a setting that he had not observed."¹²

Our study will center primarily around three of Faulkner's masterpieces - Sanctuary, Light in August, and The Sound and the Fury. We will refer to many other of his works, but our study will always find its basis in these three works in which we found the material which expressed most meaningfully for us the theological concerns which are also the concerns of this paper.

In this attempt at a dialogue between Christian theology and Faulkner's writings, we will be aware of relevant traditional and contemporary theological concepts. No attempt will be made, however, to force Faulkner's writings to conform to a particular theological mold; that would be no true dialogue. Rather, we must allow Faulkner's theological concerns to speak for themselves. As we perceive the theological concerns of the writings, we will attempt to relate them when possible to statements of Christian theology, if it seems a genuine relation does exist. Similarities between Faulkner's theological concerns and the concerns of Christian theology will be pointed to. At times we will employ Christian theology to clarify and to elucidate Faulkner's expressions which appear directed toward a similar concern. Throughout we will beware of any critics or of any methods which would try to force Faulkner's concept of life into any framework which the art itself does not allow. Let us now move on to the complex, tension-filled world of William Faulkner's writings.

NOTES: CHAPTER 1

¹Edith Hamilton, The Ever-Present Past (New York, 1964), p. 162.

²Nathan A. Scott, Jr., Modern Literature and the Religious Frontier (New York, 1958), pp. 37, 38.

³Ibid., p. 44.

⁴Ibid., p. 45.

⁵Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era (Chicago, 1948),
xii.

⁶Ibid., ix.

⁷Ibid. p. 59.

⁸Scott, op. cit., pp. 37, 38.

⁹Ibid., p. 40.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Nathan A. Scott, Jr., editor, The Climate of Faith in Modern Literature (New York, 1964), p. 35.

¹²Allen Tate, "William Faulkner 1897-1962," The Sewanee Review, LXXI, Number 1 (Winter, 1963), p. 161.

CHAPTER II
"CALVINISM" AND ADVERSE FORCES
IN FAULKNER'S CORPUS

One contemporary critic has said of Faulkner:

Faulkner embodies and dramatizes the basic Christian concepts so effectively that he can with justice be regarded as one of the most profoundly Christian writers in our time. There is everywhere in his writings the basic premise of Original Sin: everywhere the conflict between the flesh and the spirit . . . Man in Faulkner is a heroic, tragic figure.¹

For our purposes, at this stage in our investigation, it is highly incautious to term Faulkner a Christian writer. Our definition of "Christian" must depend more upon conclusions reached later in relation to Faulkner's concept of grace. But before we can adequately deal with the question of God's action in the world and in the characters' lives of Faulkner's creation, we must examine these lives. Are these characters and is this world capable of responding to God's action? Is there any room in this milieu for the action of a transcendent God? Obviously before we can deal with this basic question in any depth, we must first probe into the nature of Faulkner's men and of their world. As we carry on this investigation, we must honestly deal with the material

as Faulkner presents it, without any attempts to force his conception of the world into any pre-conceived Christian categories. But, on the other hand, we must be watchful for any Christian motifs (or their perversions) which are evidently truly Faulkner's and which have significantly shaped his world view. Mr. Stewart is quite correct when he states that "Original Sin" is everywhere present in Faulkner's writings. Some concept of a force which is abundantly active in the lives of men and in their world, always destroying and involving men in depravity, and a force which must in some way be equated with the tradition's doctrine of "Original Sin" is obviously present in all Faulkner's works.

Faulkner is heavily indebted to "Calvinism," in both constructive and destructive ways. It seems of little avail and even dishonest to attempt to divorce William Faulkner from his "southern Calvinist" roots. The land in which he was born, reared, in which he wrote and in which he died was thoroughly infiltrated with a peculiar brand of degenerate Calvinist thought. We will not attempt to thoroughly define "southern Calvinism;" in reality, it is indefinable, as are all atmospheres and environments. We can affirm that it actually has little to do with that great

theological system defined by John Calvin. On the whole, it is a distortion, a perversion of that noble grappling with the Christian faith. In the final analysis, our "Calvinists" are more concerned with petty morality than with the ethical foundation of a society, with reputation more than with righteousness, with physical virginity more than with chastity, with financial deliverance more than with salvation, with systems of reasons and rational outlines to success more than with human emotions of love and nobility. Faulkner's reaction to this base perversion of true Calvinism fills many pages of many works. Quentin Compson with his crazed obsession about his sister's virginity, Flem Snopes guided by his goal of respectability, Granny (The Unvanquished) with her soap and shallow conception of her own sins, Narcissa who values her brother's (really her own) good name above any semblance of justice, Senator Clarence Snopes with his despicable double image of public and private morality - good "puritans" all in varying degrees in their own ways.

Perhaps it is unnecessary to belabor Faulkner's reaction to much of "Puritanism," but it is only in this mood of vigorous rejection of this aspect of his heritage that we can properly read his works. In Light In August, three characters are paraded before the reader's eyes who tell so

much of this phenomenon against which Faulkner is reacting. It would seem that in the figure of McEachern, our writer gathers all his concepts of "Calvinism." In McEachern, we see a man of "religion," a faithful Presbyterian, obsessed with the fervor of election and damnation, of Original Sin and retribution. Here is a character who has completely given his life to a set of dogmatic principles which characterize the perversion of Calvinism (and ironically by so doing has assured his own violent end). The "penny-pinching Calvinistic" ethic which entails material reward for hard work is also quite evident in McEachern. Faulkner skillfully seems to use this character as a tool with which to introduce his own dramatic theme of predestination into the novel. In a strange way, McEachern predetermines the life of his charge. He expresses the theme of Christmas' innate damnation from the moment he views the child. "Christmas. A heathenish name. Sacrilege. I will change that." And indeed the name "Christmas" would be equated with sacrilege in many good "Calvinist" minds before the novel's close. This statement, which readily brings to mind Puritan England's ban against Christmas festivities, appears as a mandate for Christmas' predetermined damnation. The motivation of the "Calvinist" economic ethic causes McEachern to temporarily put aside "decency" and to take Christmas to

lunch at a place, not respectable, but cheap. This act is to determine a good part of Christmas' journey. In an ironic way, however, these acts and the brutal beatings which McEachern administers to Christmas (some for not knowing his catechism!) are in a strange way foreshadowing and pre-determining McEachern's own death.

In Hines we encounter a figure caught up in a perverted belief in damnation which allows no grace. He first damns Christmas to the life he must lead by allowing his mother to die in childbirth and by placing him in an orphanage. It is Hines' belief in the eternal presence of evil which dominates all his life. But in typical "Calvinist" fashion, he sees evil in everyone else, but styles himself an instrument of God. The final determinant in Christmas' life is seen in Grimm, one of Faulkner's numerous representatives of the "Calvinistic" community. Grimm kills and castrates Christmas, thus bringing to end the life of the sacrificial victim of the white "Calvinistic" community.

But even the two who have rebelled against the abominations of "Calvinism" are still in its clutches. The Reverend Gail Hightower has repudiated "Calvinism's" jealous and repressive God. But in a sense he has not broken out of his old mold: he still stresses a God of justice as opposed to one of mercy in his belief that he has somehow

"bought immunity." He exclaims: "I have paid. I have paid." Hightower conceives of God as a trusty merchant who has receipted his bill and will honor his claim to the precious merchandise he has purchased at such cost.² Joe Christmas, the most violent rebel against this "religion" in the book, is in a sense the sternest and most doctrinaire Calvinist of all the characters. One of the marks of all Faulkner's Calvinists is their fear and distrust of women and their hatred of the female principle. Christmas resents the womanly softness of Mrs. McEachern even more than he hates the "religious" brutality of Mr. McEachern. Joe does not really want mercy but he desires justice; he fears the demands of love and desires only a vindication of his identity and integrity.

The characters who show the closest affinities with perverted Calvinism also appear to be in closest alliance with the forces of evil. Faulkner depicts the qualities in these "Calvinist" characters which most closely manifest the nature of evil. But before we examine what Faulkner considers to be the essential nature of evil, we still have several facets of Faulkner's relation to Calvinism to examine.

Faulkner's concept of sex and its relation to sin also has been influenced by the Calvinist tradition. Cleanth Brooks has ably pointed out that in Faulkner's view, women stand outside the moral code.

Faulkner's view of women, then, is radically old-fashioned - even medieval. Woman is the source and sustainer of virtue and also a prime source of evil. She can be either, because she is, as man is not, always a little beyond good and evil. With her powerful natural drives and her instinct for the concrete and personal, she does not need to agonize over her decisions. There is no code for her to master - no initiation for her to undergo. For this reason she has access to a wisdom which is veiled from man; and man's codes, good or bad, are always, in their formal abstraction, a little absurd in her eyes. Women are close to nature; the feminine principle is closely related to the instinctive and natural; woman typically manifests pathos rather than ethos.⁴

Brooks sees the masculine role as active, the feminine role as passive, fostering, as undergirding society. Woman sends man into ethical battle, but she remains aloof from this battle. Insofar as Faulkner's "Calvinism" represents a repression and a constriction of natural impulse and a denial of nature, Faulkner regards it as an evil attitude. The foil to characters who have become hardened and unsympathetic to the lives of others because of their "Calvinist" notion of a harsh, vindictive God are women in closer communion with nature, like Lena Grove.⁵

Faulkner is guided a great deal in his concept of woman by the pagan archetypal figure of the great earth mother of fertility and warmth, of nearness to the earth and to nature. The young Eula Varner probably illustrates this symbolism of the passive, natural goddess better than any of the other Faulkner characters. Lena also illustrates this

amoral and fertile goddess type. Such a feminine ideal does graphically contend with the stark Calvinist masculine principle. But it also seems as if we must look to a certain interpretation of women in the Christian tradition, especially in the "Calvinist" tradition, to fully understand Faulkner's concept of woman's strange alliance with the forces of evil. This interpretation of the account of the Fall in Genesis 5 makes much of the role woman plays in this action (usually bypassing the main thrust of the Genesis account). Here "the woman" has a private audience with the serpent in which she succumbs to its demands. It is she who rejects God's commandment and by her pride believes she can live without the ordered moral law for God's creation, so the account might run. "The woman" and not "the man" is in alliance with evil. This account has been rendered in our Christian tradition many times in reference to our archetypal man and woman. Popular perverted "Calvinism" has made much of the alliance of woman and evil, with the crude cries of "bitchery and abomination" by Dr. Hines. It is this act of "the woman" which opens the couple's eyes to the knowledge of man's condition. Thus the biblical account could be interpreted as "the woman" initially initiating "the man" and opening his eyes to the radical dimension of evil. I contend that this misinterpretation of Genesis has played a

large role in shaping Faulkner's view of woman's alliance with evil, of her standing above moral order, and of her different reaction to evil from that of man with his terrible initiation. The woman whom Brooks sees as challenging the hardness of "Calvinist" man is herself in part a creation of "Calvinist" perversion. In a sense, we have two "Calvinist" image creations confronting each other. The earth mother motif is strong, but Faulkner also borrows heavily from the perverted Eve motif in his total evaluation of woman. Eula and Lena are to a much less extent "pagan-Calvinist" feminine types. And the southern "Calvinist" milieu in which Faulkner was reared has greatly influenced his concept of woman with her strange alliance with evil, her easy adjustment to its sway, and her role above the moral order.

Although Faulkner disavows much of perverted "Calvinism" and ironically seems at times strangely in its clutches himself, he owes much indeed to a purer strain of Calvinism. His very consciousness of evil (and of good), his vision of right and wrong, and his subtle insistence on a basic morality in which the old verities of courage, nobility, and love prevail, spring from a strain of Calvinist Christianity. He is one of the few novelists of our times who in a great tragic vision can discern a basic morality in the

life pattern of mankind. Penn Warren has commented, "The values which distinguish 'tradition' from Faulkner's nightmare version of modernity are ultimately moral."⁶ All Faulkner's leading male characters (perhaps like his archetypal Adam) must terribly and graphically be initiated into the nature and reality of evil before they can begin to achieve any full "manhood." The characters like Jason, Flem Snopes, Quentin, remain "innocent" and serve evil. But the tragic hero like even Joe Christmas, Hightower, Bayard, and Horace Benbow, once they have at some time in their lives confronted the terrible dimensions of evil, at least have a chance to grapple with it and to know that the basic moral virtues are the only way to confront it, as difficult and as much a cause of suffering as the fulfillment of these virtues may be. In a way, all Faulkner's tragic heroes are the Pilgrim Christian. Calvinist morality lives on in Faulkner.

Man is capable of evil, and this means that goodness has to be achieved by struggle and discipline and effort . . . Finally Faulkner's noblest characters are willing to face the fact that most men can learn the deepest truths about themselves and about reality only through suffering. Hurt and pain and loss are not mere accidents to which the human being is subject; nor are they mere punishments incurred by human error; they can be the means to the deeper knowledge and to the more abundant life.⁷

Man can prevail in right only after he has been initiated

into the depth of human evil, suffering and being hurt as the rite proceeds. Those who endure and prevail accept creaturehood and have "the courage to be." Like the true Puritan the enduring see man in the light of his limitations of pride, evil, and creatureliness.⁸

There is yet another sense in which Faulkner is indebted to his true Puritan heritage. Victor Strandberg has labelled this quality in the author's writings the "technique of inversion."⁹ This is a thoroughly biblical principle, and undoubtedly Faulkner owes it to his Calvinist background. The biblical method of inversion is the technique of offering one's followers the absolute antithesis of what reason and experience would predicate. In the biblical tradition, God uses the most unlikely and incredible instruments to work out his will among men. This idea is seen throughout the Old Testament - the lying Jacob, the young David, Moses without a voice - and most graphically in the "suffering servant" Messiah in the New Testament, who is a far-cry from the conquering warrior who was to establish a Jewish earthly utopia. If we could assign the relation of this inversion in Faulkner to a transcendent God, we would truly be approaching a true idea of grace in his writings in God's loving action to men. But suffice it for the present to point to some illustrations of inversion

in the Faulkner corpus without reference to God's purpose. The young Bayard faces his father's murderer, not as a young southern gentleman avenging the death according to the haughty code of honor, but unarmed. In this action Bayard points the reader to a truer code of honor and of morality. Ruby Lamer, the former prostitute, with her courage, her patience, her love for Goodwin, as one representative of the "low-life" world, provides the standards by which to measure polite society. Lena, the unfortunate dispossessed young woman carrying her illegitimate child about the southlands, is the very instrument of light and reconciliation which Faulkner offers in Light In August. A study of Parson Shegog and his sermon in The Sound and the Fury is an intense case study of inversion.¹⁰ The tawdriness of the route to the church and of the church itself sets the stage for the mystic vision of glory that will later ensue. The parson's unimpressive appearance beside the local preacher further sets the stage. His formal sermon shows that Shegog possesses great training in the art of rhetoric and that he has successfully shed the Negroid voice. But Dilsey's (herself an example of inversion) great vision is not evoked by this polished rhetoric, but by the natural, unplanned, after-sermon, in which Shegog relapses to his humble Negro voice in words which shall ever echo in the annals of American literature. In the final chapter of The Sound and the Fury,

Shegog says:

I died dat dem whut sees en believes shall
never die. Breddren, O breddren! I sees de
doom crack en hears de golden horns shouten
down de glory, en de arisen dead whut got
de blood en de ricklickshun of de Lamb!

"De generations passed away." This novel certainly tells
of the passing away of the Compsons. "Wus a rich man:
what he now, O breddren?" We hardly need to answer the
question as to where Jason is now. The voice of the Negro
preacher speaks eloquently for Faulkner, expressing the
principle of inversion.

Perhaps we would do well to turn to Faulkner's
bitterest work which is dominated by the motif of evil
working its way in the world. Faulkner characterizes his
most brutal initiation into evil in this novel in the person
of Horace Benbow. Horace is an idealist who places great
stock in the ability of human reason to work the solutions
of human problems. In the course of Sanctuary, Horace is
initiated into the gamut of evils and horrors - an inhuman
gangster's lack of moral consciousness, an unnatural rape
of gruesome dimensions, a young girl's easy adjustment to
life in a brothel, the horrendous power for evil of a
crazed mob. Evil's way is seen most devastatingly in two
climactic events. Temple chooses to testify against an
innocent man who has done her no harm instead of telling

the truth and revealing that the real murderer was Popeye, the very one who unnaturally raped her and interred her in a brothel. Narcissa, Horace's sister, appears as a calm and serene lady of society. But next to Popeye (or in a sense more than Popeye) she manifests evil to the world. Narcissa tips off the district attorney to information that will allow him to defeat her brother and make a mockery of all judicial order. She does not want her brother involved with Lee Goodwin. Her guiding motivation is maintaining her (and her brother's) good "Calvinist" reputation. Her brother and justice in the end are sacrificed by her to her ideal of respectability. Horace is thoroughly initiated into the great actuality of evil. The system of rational justice which he attempts to represent goes down in defeat to a perjured testimony and to violent mob action. The district attorney wins by any means possible. Reason cannot by itself adequately combat evil; nor can humanistic idealism. Horace discovers the horrifying presence of evil, its insidiousness, and its penetration of every kind of rational or civilized order.¹¹

Faulkner seems to view evil in a two dimensional sense, as the Christian tradition always has. In an Augustinian fashion he sees the capacity for evil as resting in man. One dimension of all Faulkner's villains is their

estrangement from nature; they are rigid and mechanical. Thomas Sutpen has a great plan from which he will not depart; Jason in his design for wealth is oblivious to any natural morality. But, perhaps it is in Popeye that we view most graphically depicted this estrangement from nature. Popeye has eyes like "two knobs of soft black rubber" and has "that vicious depthless quality of stamped tin." This sinister character is frightened by an owl (a representative of the realm of the natural), while Horace remains unmoved. Popeye's further estrangement from nature is seen in his corn cob rape of Temple Drake. He is "out of key" with natural processes; this constitutes part of the dimension he possesses for evil. He has none of the natural vices of the "Calvinistic" ilk; he does not drink or fulfill his sexual desires. But he certainly possesses no natural virtues! He stands apart in his sinister, mechanical rigidity from all natural functionings. Evil for Faulkner involves a violation of nature and runs counter to the natural appetites and affections;¹² it is a deviation from and a perversion of man's spontaneous and natural purposes for which he finds himself created.

The corrupting force which can perhaps best be termed "lack of love" is a way in which man commits sin in Faulkner's works. Narcissa shows no love for her brother Horace. It is

in the family relations that Faulkner best displays evil as lack of love. The prime reason for Narcissa's lack of love for Horace appears to be pride in her own social position and respectability. All her concern pridefully flows into her own well-being; no concern flows to her brother's needs. She is unwilling to pay the price, to sacrifice in love any part of herself or her reputation, in order for Horace to find himself in his quest for justice. Faulkner indeed considers lack of concern within the family a grave evil. The primary corrupting source in the Compson family is not the Stoic, alcohol-drenched father; at times he is capable of real concern for other members of the family. The source of the corrupting evil in this family is the mother. The Compson family has no centre, no mother, no love; it is founded on selfishness and egotism, not on love.¹³ Mrs. Compson married her husband not out of love, but to better her own social position. She considers herself humble and devout, but in reality, she is proud and turned in on herself. She cannot understand why her loveless offspring have turned out as they have. "It can't be simply to flout and hurt me. Whoever God is, He would not permit that. I'm a lady." A telling remark indeed. Nor are Quentin, Jason, and Caddy capable of loving each other; they have been doomed to a loveless family existence. Ironically, only the idiot Benjy is capable of a sort of

primitive love toward Caddy (further inversion). By their self-centeredness, pride, and lack of love, Faulkner's characters transmit evil.

The other dimension of evil which Faulkner expresses has a supra-human base. In an almost Pauline sense, Faulkner conceives of evil as a sinister force at work in the world against which the moral man at times strives in an apparently hopeless manner. Faulkner's debt to his Calvinist milieu cannot be overlooked in this respect. His characters are caught in the swift-moving flow of evil which often renders them impotent and carries them to their damnation. Faulkner allows his reader to incompletely see some of the environmental causes of his characters' engagement with evil. Popeye's bleak childhood at an early stage in his life set him off on an evil career. Temple's pampered and self-centered beginnings as the daughter of a prominent judge set her on her course. But Temple has an opportunity to escape from Popeye's sinister web when he stops while they are enroute to Memphis, but she remains in his clutches, quite willingly. It is as if she were caught in the evil current and even when by her own action she could escape, she remains entranced by the force of evil. The optimistic Horace attempts to stir up hope in Goodwin and convince him that their case is prematurely won. But Goodwin rejects these attempts as if he has a foreknowledge

that the sinister forces in one of their manifestations (Popeye on the jury) have already won the fray. He waits sullenly for evil's triumph. The conclusion of Sanctuary affirms by its dramatic motion that some transcendent, supra-worldly powers of evil have mysteriously triumphed. Faulkner leaves many of the crucial questions unanswered, offering no rational explanations for the final triumph of evil. How did Eustace Graham get his thoroughly detailed information about what happened at the Old Frenchman's place, about the rape, and about the shooting of Tommy? What brought Temple's father, Judge Drake, to the trial, to suggestively symbolize his involvement as a judge and prime representative of the community's justice with the force of evil? Furthermore, absolutely no answers are offered for Temple's utterly irrational and false testimony which saves the man she should have hated most. Why did Temple perjure herself in this way? It seems as if she were still under the entrancing power of evil. By leaving these questions which are basically crucial for evil's triumph unanswered, Faulkner dramatically suggests the transcendent forces of evil at work. Many critics have ~~tried~~ to fit the pieces together and to come up with the proper motives on the characters' parts which would answer these questions.¹⁴ It would seem as if they have missed the point of Faulkner's

dramatic device. The author flays his reader with the evil forces at work throughout the novel; often these forces can be humanly and rationally described. But at the end his reader is left with a set of unanswered questions which suggest the other, the supra-human dimension of evil, which has been manifesting itself in concrete situations and in persons throughout the novel.

Horace Benbow struggles diligently with the forces of evil almost till the very end. Apparently he has lost the battle as he returns home to his wife after the events surrounding the unfortunate trial. Narcissa's deceit and Temple's perjury have completed his initiation into the meaning of evil. He is overwhelmed and defeated; he is no longer waging his losing battle. Horace has often been termed a weak combatant against evil; Faulkner has been accused of setting up a purposely weak "hero" hampered by his "college professor's" idealist-humanist outlook on life. But it seems unlikely that Faulkner enjoys seeing Benbow battered by evil. The author could have provided a less naive, more confident sort to battle for justice. But Faulkner could have sent a much weaker combatant into the ring. Horace does endure and persevere until the very end; he takes crushing blow after crushing blow. Horace is relatively able and quite dedicated to seeing justice

prevail. It seems as if Faulkner is emphasizing the strength and power of evil when he finally sees Horace overcome. Horace's defeat comes from a deep insight and personal realization that the forces of evil are rooted in the very fiber of human existence and are more than a just match for any man. As the author has outlined this novel, a person of a much more practical and hardheaded nature than Horace would have gone down to defeat.¹⁵ Faulkner quite realistically relates a more total defeat in this novel than in any of his other major novels. It is not that the major combatant for morality always runs home in defeat to his unfortunate wife, but that any man must face this risk. This does not strike this reviewer as unnecessarily pessimistic.

Faulkner's view of sin as both rooted in man's actions and in a transcendent world force seems to place him firmly in the Christian tradition in his view of sin and of the sinful nature of man. Nor has the Christian tradition ever underrated the terrible power of evil in the world.

Bishop Aulén is helpful when he comments:

Both the theory that regards consciousness of sin as a preliminary stage, and that conception which, like Schleiermacher, asserts that the consciousness of sin disappears in the measure that the 'consciousness of God' is realized, are foreign to faith.¹⁶

Aulén then quotes further: "Quo sanctior quis est, eo magis sentit illam pugnam." The nearer God comes to man and the

more completely the fellowship between God and man is realized, the more acute becomes the consciousness of sin. Faulkner is certainly conscious of human sin, but we must not readily conclude that this consciousness comes from his sense of the nearness of God. However, we are tempted to conclude that whether William Faulkner realized that his depth concept of human life in all its sinful dimensions resulted from the nearness of God to him or whether he did not, that God was certainly working in him as he expressed these depth concepts about existence. The question still remains as to whether the world of William Faulkner is in touch with grace, as it so graphically is influenced by transcendent forces of evil.

As we have discovered, there is a real sense of evil in Faulkner's writings which stems from Christian roots. This evil is always in conflict with noble humanity in these works, but, of course, it provides the only setting in which meaningful moral acts can occur. There is yet another motif constantly in tension with and working against Faulkner's humanistic optimism. This motif has much in common with tragedy's fate and also with the predestination of a terrible God. Faulkner vividly depicts life in his characters, not philosophical or theological systems, and we cannot glibly label this powerful force. This "fate" is

too much connected with life to be neatly explained away. But much American criticism of late has too much de-emphasized this motif in Faulkner's works. On the other hand French existentialist criticism has seen it as the central factor in plot development in Faulkner's writings. This is an equally distorted assessment. Many of Faulkner's characters strongly sense that their lives are completely subject to a transcendent fate which makes free, volitional action almost impossible. It seems a fair assessment to say that this overwhelming sense of "fate" hangs ominously over all of Faulkner's better works. It is there and cannot be explained away by orthodox Christian or by humanist critics. First, let us pay serious heed to the "fatalist" camp. Pierre Emmanuel observes that:

The process of time as we conceive it, from past to future through present, is a mere appearance, a delusion. Real time has nothing to do with those categories: it is a simultaneous though unconscious present. Something like God's eye, and Faulkner's God is a terrible one, all the more because He is imminent and takes the figure of fate.¹⁷

It can hardly be questioned that many of Faulkner's characters know that they are living through an allotted and planned scheme of life from beginning to end. They are caught in fate's tragic web, and they are preordained for damnation. Their fate is tragic but not evil in the full sense; these

creatures are deprived of all moral choice. Mink Snopes (The Mansion) senses his life to be caught up in the flow of fate of "Old Moster." Before he actually kills Houston, he assumes that he has already killed him. Nancy and the Compson children in "That Evening Sun" mysteriously share the conviction that she is as good as dead by the hand of Jesus, her husband. As Nancy in a trance awaits her fate alone, Candace remarks:

But we could hear her, because she began just after we came up out of the ditch, the sound that was not singing and not unsinging. 'Who will do our washing now, Father?' I said.¹⁸

Before Joe Christmas commits the act of the murder of Joanna Burden

. . . he believed with calm paradox that he was the volitionless servant of the fatality in which he believed that he did not believe. He was saying to himself I had to do it already in the past tense, I had to do it. She said so herself. ¹⁹

Christmas seems more in the hands of overwhelming fate than he seems in the grips of sin; he has no choice in the matter. In Quentin Compson (The Sound and the Fury) we see, perhaps most graphically, the all-determining hand of fate. Quentin has completely lost the ability to make his own destiny; he is the captive of chronological time, the captive of the past. The present is utterly without decision, without meaning. Quentin's section relentlessly moves to

the act of his suicide. Quentin's frame of reference is an ego-centered, private one;²⁰ and his personal life is destined to move only to its ending. Jean-Paul Sartre remarks:

As for Faulkner's heroes, they never foresee: the car takes them away, as they look back . . . The suicide is an issue already determined, something which he [Quentin] approaches blindly without either desiring or conceiving it.²¹

Classical tragedy lives again in Faulkner's tragic heroes; the deep, mysterious gods have the day. Man is in the grim throes of fate. In such a world, time, that is, a linear concept of time has little meaning. The focus of the novel must be upon those pre-determined events which fate has already allotted for man. We are not in the Judaeo-Christian world in which all history and each life is progressing along a meaningful, self-determined path to fulfillment. To the extent that Quentin's and Christinas's lives are governed by fate, these characters are incapable of making any meaningful decisions for either good or for evil. In their pre-determined world, there is neither good nor evil, only fate. The structure of the plot of The Sound and the Fury is not linear development of action; several key events are focused on and all development centers around them. All time is scrambled and meaning is not to be

bound in chronological development of action. John W. Hunt grants:

Obviously, Sartre is right about the relative absence of a present and a future in Faulkner's reality. His objection amounts finally to an unwillingness to accept as possible a fallen world in which the will is obliterated. Since in such a world all reality is past reality, the literal future is fixed and the efficacy of the will is denied.²²

Rabi sums up this motif in Faulkner's writings saying:

Faulkner's work reminds one forcibly of Greek tragedy, in the sense that man appears less the agent of action than the instrument of the gods and their playground.²³

In what sense is the world expressed by this motif in Faulkner a Christian one? We can answer with a high degree of surety that it is in no sense Christian. Finite man as the pawn of fatality is a theme rarely to be found in Christian writings, despite the fact that classical writings abound with this idea. The development in the Christian tradition of the doctrine of double predestination is indeed late and a strange creature in itself; this doctrine has little relation with the Pauline concept of the Christian as one predestined for glory. Faulkner's knowledge of degenerate Calvinism, with its tragic sense of predestination to damnation, no doubt has aided in his presentation of fatality in his novels. However, the root source

of such a concept is on pagan soil and not on Christian. It seems, all in all, a rather futile enterprise to attempt to determine what factors in Faulkner's consciousness compelled his depiction of this dire fatalism. Nor do neat labels of "Greek tragedian" or "degenerate Calvinist" solve the problems. Suffice it to say, that for our purposes, we affirm that this world governed by fate is a real motif in Faulkner's writings.

Where can we expect to perceive the depiction of the operation of grace in a world controlled by fate? I maintain that we cannot expect to find it anywhere in such a world. Grace found no place in the world as it was pictured by the Greek writers of tragedy. Fate moves the lives of characters unalterably to their ruin. Mortal man can only hope for acts of nobility and courage in the context of his ultimate tragic, pre-ordained end. And man himself is the source of these heroic acts. In such a world, we cannot expect Faulkner to set up a transcendent grace to counteract fate. So long as Faulkner's characters live in a world governed by the gods of fate, we cannot expect God's grace to enter the scene. The two views are dramatically incompatible. But Faulkner indeed has many world-views, and fate is not left without serious challenge.

Perhaps before we continue we would do well to briefly

pay heed to a well-placed reminder, lest we lose all sense of balance.

In the first place, we cannot accept the tacit assumption that Faulkner's vision is the same as that of his lost characters. Because it is wider and more inclusive, the metaphysics of time so unacceptable to Sartre is also not 'true' finally for Faulkner.²⁴

With this word of caution, we can continue our investigation of one facet of Faulkner's world with better perspective.

Edmond La B. Cherbonnier, speaking of classical tragedy in its pure sense states:

Tragedy, however, portrays the downfall of man who heroically embodies some great (though morally neutral) ideal or power. To view his demise in terms of good and evil is to step outside the tragic frame of reference.²⁵

And we can rather securely state that, viewed from one perspective, Faulkner's tragic heroes - Christmas, Quentin, do not fall because of their immorality or sin. Quentin possesses great intellectual and introspective power.

Christmas is a character of great vitality and force. But Faulkner is not writing pure tragedy, and this statement is certainly not the final analysis. Quentin even tries to commit a sin to damnation to give moral meaning to life, but he fails. Quentin is basically a Stoic and the concept of guilt is alien to the Stoic mind. The concept of guilt would contradict the rationality of man, disavow his essential

identity with the Divine.²⁶ And in Quentin's intellectualized, introverted reality, even a sense of guilt which would give meaning to life was unattainable.

Faulkner's world has two dimensions thus far established - transcendent evil and fate. When man lives in a world in which evil abounds and fate predetermines, (but not absolutely) what is he to do on his own? In his Nobel Prize Address, William Faulkner, speaking of man states:

He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed - love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice.²⁷

Faulkner, in the same address, continues:

I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure: that when the last ding-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last red and dying evening, that even there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking. I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice, and endurance.²⁸

Here is stated a real, potent, and primary motif in the writings of Faulkner which several French critics have

completely failed to notice. There is something of the artist in the Horace Benbow who is defeated by evil and in the Quentin and the Chrstimas who are to a large extent pawns of fate; but Faulkner's message is far too tension-filled and complex to end there. Against both evil and fate Faulkner opposes a stalwart humanism.

In our attempt to understand the complexity of Faulkner's world, we went to much pain to distinguish between the forces of evil and of fate in his writings. And we maintain still that these forces with roots in divergent traditions are both very much present in Faulkner. To recognize these two stands is to enrich our understanding. We suppose that a great artist (and Faulkner is that) expresses in his art those dimensions of life which he has experienced. Faulkner, we may conclude, has experienced both transcendent evil (very much in the Christian tradition) and fate (with origins outside the Christian tradition). It has been of value for us to point out these two strands, but I seriously question whether Faulkner would have gone to the pains we have to make this distinction.

We are in debt to the recent work of a critic who has brilliantly set forth the tension between the Stoic and Christian elements in Faulkner's works, but we seriously doubt whether Faulkner is aware of this tension to the

extent that Mr. Hunt is. It is a great distance from classical stoicism to modern humanism; certain elements of modern humanism stem from the Stoic frame of reference. We must question whether Faulkner consciously borrows from Stoic originals to supplement his thought. Stoic thought has come down to him, as it has most Western men, by an involuted and indirect route. It is a long way from Greek Stoicism to "Southern Stoicism" and Faulkner seems to owe more to the ambiguous latter term than he does to the better defined former. Faulkner is more concerned with man's moral battle than he is with its Stoic or Christian natures. It would seem more in fitting with Faulkner's mode of thinking to assert that man has an innate ability to battle against those forces (both evil and fate) which work against him and at times to endure and to prevail. There appears to be an essential metaphysical simplicity in Faulkner's complex depiction of the battle of moral forces with adverse forces, a simplicity which will not be forced into involved analyses. Moral acts are more possible in a world of sin and guilt than they are in a world of blind fate. Faulkner sets up these moral acts, however, as the only alternative to both sinister forces. Contra Sartre, his fatalism is not often (granted, however, at times) as absolute as to outlaw positive action.

In the final analysis, after uncovering strains of

tragic fatalism in Faulkner's characters, we must state that these are not the major strains. Cleanth Brooks is essentially correct when he asserts that Faulkner believes that man has free will and that he must act responsibly and discipline himself.²⁹ It has been the intention of this presentation, however, that Faulkner's experience of fate be seen in his works before we assert his belief in free will.

NOTES: CHAPTER 2

p. 22. ¹Cleanth Brooks, The Hidden God (New Haven, 1963)

²Ibid., p. 37.

³Ibid., p. 38.

⁴Ibid., p. 27.

⁵Ibid., p. 35.

⁶Robert Penn Warren, "Faulkner: The South and the Negro," The Southern Review, I, New Series, Number 3 (July, 1965), p. 511.

⁷Brooks, op. cit., p. 43.

⁸M. E. Bradford, "Faulkner Among the Puritans," The Sewanee Review, LXXII, Number 1 (Winter, 1964), p. 148.

⁹Victor Strandberg, "Faulkner's Poor Parson and the Technique of Inversion," The Sewanee Review, LXXIII, Number 2 (Spring, 1965), pp. 181-90. I am hereto indebted for this paragraph.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 185-89. I am specifically hereto indebted for comments about the sermon.

¹¹Brooks, op. cit., p. 25.

¹²Ibid., p. 29.

¹³Lawrence E. Bowling, "Faulkner and the Theme of Innocence," The Kenyon Review, XX, Number 3 (Summer, 1958), p. 477.

¹⁴vide Cleanth Brooks, "Faulkner's Sanctuary: The Discovery of Evil," The Sewanee Review, LXXI, Number 1, (Winter, 1963).

¹⁵Cleanth Brooks, "Faulkner's Sanctuary: The Discovery of Evil," p. 3.

¹⁶Gustaf Aulén, The Faith of the Christian Church (Philadelphia, 1960), p. 240.

¹⁷Pierre Emmanuel, "Faulkner and the Sense of Sin," The Harvard Advocate, CXXXV (November, 1951), p. 20.

¹⁸William Faulkner, "That Evening Sun," The Faulkner Reader (New York, 1958), p. 544.

¹⁹William Faulkner, Light in August (New York, 1932), pp. 244, 245.

²⁰John W. Hunt, William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension (Syracuse, New York, 1965), p. 65.

²¹Frederick J. Hoffman and Olga W. Vickery, (eds.) William Faulkner: Two Decades of Criticism (East Lansing, 1951), p. 134.

²²Hunt, op. cit., p. 11.

²³Hoffman and Vickery, (editors), op. cit., p. 134.

²⁴Hunt, op. cit., p. 22.

²⁵Nathan A. Scott, Jr., (ed.) The Tragic Vision and The Christian Faith (New York, 1957), p. 29.

²⁶Hunt, op. cit., p. 29.

²⁷William Faulkner, "Nobel Prize Address," The Faulkner Reader (New York, 1958), pp. 3, 4.

²⁸Ibid., p. 4.

²⁹Brooks, The Hidden God, p. 24.

CHAPTER III

POSITIVE FORCES: ENDURING AND PREVAILING

When we turn our attention to Light in August, we must first admit that the forces working against man's enduring and prevailing are indeed potent. But upon examination, we will discover more 'light' in this work than we did in the feeble flicker of Horace Benbow in Sanctuary. Fate and perverted Calvinism indeed offer stiff opposition to those who would prevail. Basically, Christmas goes under to these adverse forces. The Christ-imagery which is associated with Christmas throughout the novel does not lend any positive value to his actions; he is not a "Christ-figure." This imagery is employed to underline his role as a sacrificial victim; Christmas is not the bearer of positive values in the novel, but the tragic, helpless victim of forces which overwhelm him.¹ In his own conflict between light and dark (blood), Christmas is overwhelmed. He is torn between two realities and two worlds in this conflict. He has no positive evidence that he is a Negro and has deliberately chosen to consider himself one,² yet he will not attend a Negro school. Light and dark are not resolved within Christmas; he is unable on the whole to be a positive carrier of meaning, of "light" in his outward actions. And,

in certain rigid attitudes, as we have previously pointed out, he is the worst "Calvinist" of all. He could not escape his "Calvinist" environmental rearing. But there even seems to be some evidence that near the end of Christmas' life, Faulkner depicts him as breaking the bonds of the adverse forces. This turning point toward light may well begin in the following passage:

During the last seven days he has had no paved street, yet he has travelled farther than in all the thirty years before. And yet he is still inside the circle. 'And yet I have been farther in these seven days than in all thirty years,' he thinks. 'But I have never got outside the circle. I have never broken out of the ring of what I have already done and cannot even undo,' he thinks quietly, sitting on the seat . . . 3

In dying, when Christmas refuses to use the pistol which he was carrying, he commits a meaningful moral act and in a sense finally "breaks out of the circle." His final act takes on a quite meaningful morality when compared with his executioner's actions. One critic seems to sum up this final partial triumph of Christmas quite adequately.

From this point on (the previous quotation) Christmas is able to understand and accept the existence of evil and good together. It is this understanding which enables Christmas to make one final gesture in which he demonstrates that his earlier belief has been overcome by his present understanding. And it is the same understanding which will not permit him to use the weapon which he carries to protect himself from Percy Grimm.⁴

Christmas may well be personally "redeemed" at his end, but he is hardly a purveyor of positive meaning, a "Christ-figure," throughout the novel.

Nor can the man of religion, Gail Hightower, be termed a positive force on the whole. He has been captured by the past, by the regional tradition, and by perverse Calvinism; he has been rendered incapable of meaningful action by these forces. The flabby, withdrawn figure is incapable throughout most of his life of offering any real concern to another human being. He has lived most of his life as the shallow shadow of his grandfather. Hightower's only defense against violence has been nonresistance;⁵ he has not positively resisted adverse forces by moral action. When Byron is leading up to telling Hightower that he plans to intervene in Lena's life, Hightower in his reclusive, non-intervening way offers the following advice to avoid involvement.

'Nonsense,' Hightower says . . . 'The thing, the only thing, for her to do is to go back to Alabama to her people.'⁶

From the beginning of his career, Hightower has withdrawn from life. In the Church he found a fitting place for such withdrawal. Hightower entered the Church for two reasons. This institution afforded a shelter from the world and a means of joining his grandfather's ghost in Jefferson.⁷

After he was defrocked, his cottage was the scene of withdrawal, still in Jefferson.

But late in Hightower's life, a glimmer of "light" appears. The event which sheds light into this downtrodden setting, the birth of Lena's child, also sheds light into Hightower's life. When he consents to act as midwife to the birth, the bonds of non-involvement and seclusion have been broken. Hightower has become intimately involved in the lives of others. This birth signals his re-birth and re-entry into life. By his involvement in this event, Hightower gains the realization of the existence of good as well as evil in the world and consequently gains the ability to make moral decisions. It is this new-found faith and freedom which allow Hightower to make the moral decision to perjure himself to ~~sacrificially~~ defend Joe Christmas.

They held Hightower on his feet; in the gloomy hall, after the sunlight, he too with his bald head and his big pale face streaked with blood, was terrible. 'Man!' he cried. 'Listen to me. He was here that night. He was with me the night of the murder. I swear to God -' 8

Finally, near the end of his career, Hightower has ventured to open himself to the criticism of the community in an act of meaningful involvement. This moral decision has opened him immediately to the charges of homosexuality by the "Calvinistic" community to which Hightower has been subservient

all his life. The bearer of community and "Calvinistic" "morality" cries:

Has every preacher and old maid in Jefferson
taken their pants down to the yellowbellied
son of a bitch? 9

But Hightower has broken the old bondage and found meaning in concern for another, a concern which demands moral decision. It seems fair to say that in Faulkner's eyes, in this lie to save another, Hightower has committed an ultimately moral action. In summary, at the end, Hightower achieves a vision of human interdependence and solidarity, a realization of the need for love and involvement in the lives of others, and a rejection of a rigidity of spirit or of any attempt to impose an abstract pattern on life such as "Calvinism" affords.¹⁰

Byron Bunch also realizes a certain freedom from the bondage to adverse forces. In Bunch, we see a person who attempts to do good and who seeks after the right; but Bunch lacks the understanding and assertive force to carry out his good intentions with the result that they influence others for the moral right. William Van O'Connor has characterized Bunch as in the tradition of Piers Plowman and Christian, a kind of Protestant Everyman; however, Bunch is free from the zealous excesses of the Protestant tradition.¹¹ Admirable in himself, Bunch fails to involve himself successfully

with others to the extent that he becomes a positive moral force. In this sense, Christmas and Bunch made a good pair (although Bunch must share credit with Lena for bringing Hightower finally to community). Faulkner does not disclose the final effect of Lena upon Bunch. But much hope seems to be present that Lena will give to Bunch the necessary understanding which will enable him also to be a positive force for moral good. Both Lena and Bunch basically believe in that peace which, as Hightower describes it, results from sinning and being forgiven.

It is in Lena Grove that we most nearly see freedom from and conquest of the adverse forces which bind all the other characters to some degree. The sense of "light," of endurance, and of human community which emerges at the end of the novel is mainly embodied in Lena. Lena's steady linear progress in unswerving faith stands in direct contrast to the other major characters' frantic circling which lacks real meaning.¹² Faulkner reveals much about Lena's pilgrimage early in the novel.

She had been doing that now for almost four weeks. Behind her the four weeks, the evocation of far, is a peaceful corridor paved with unflagging and tranquil faith and peopled with kind and nameless faces and voices.¹³

But her journey is an endless one; from the beginning the goal is dubious, and at the end Lena is still on the road.

In this journey, this feminine figure is in close rapport with nature.¹⁴ She quite definitely has many of the "natural" qualities of Faulkner's earth mother figures. She has a deep instinctive commitment to her natural function. As Cleanth Brooks quite correctly discerns, Lena acts as a natural foil to those "Calvinist" characters who have so hardened their hearts in accordance with their notion of a harsh and vindictive God that no natural warmth remains.¹⁵ Her image of eternal serene compose which works earthly progress is to a large extent in debt to the eternal earth mother of paganism:

back rolling now behind her a long monotonous succession of peaceful and undeviating changes from day to dark and dark to day again, through which she advanced in identical and anonymous and deliberate wagons as though through a succession of creakwheeled and limpeared avatairs, like something moving forever and without progress across an urn¹⁶

Eternal, placid, "static " motion, motion serene in the manner of the pilgrimage of a Diana. This is one facet of Lena Grove.

But Lena functions as a focus of meaning which transcends an amoral earth goddess. Her fertility and birth are natural, but they bestow meaning of human community far beyond the scope of pagan naturalism. Eula Varner is a much more purely pagan fertility symbol than is

Lena, and Lena is no Eula Varner.

Lena has a natural trust in her own destiny. She is not at war with herself or with any other characters. She has a simple confidence in others' goodness and in God's providence. She graciously accepts any aid which others give her and offers what assistance she can to them; Lena has no guile. A simple trust (exemplifying Jesus' command in Matthew 6.25-34) prevents Lena from being anxious about her condition in life, a condition which would drive many young women to madness. Lena answers Mrs. Armstid's contempt in this manner:

I reckon a family ought to all be together
when a chap comes. Specially the first
one. I reckon the Lord will see to that.¹⁷

Such a comment, typical of many of Lena's statements throughout the novel, expresses faith and trust hardly typical of a pagan earth mother.

Faulkner uses Lena to confirm an ideal of integrity and wholeness in the light of which the alienated characters are judged. In her journey, as she encounters various people, they are judged by their reaction to her. And Faulkner has created an artistic framework in which his reader naturally judges the novel's characters by their reaction to Lena. Needless to say, judgment falls particularly hard on the perverted Calvinist sorts. We may be

reading too much into Faulkner, if we presume that he had ever read John's Gospel and that he had it any way in mind when he wrote Light in August. But the themes of judgment and light come together in Lena. In John 3.17-19, we read:

For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and man loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

The Johannine Christ does not come to condemn or to judge the world, but confrontation with him is judgment. The light consequently means judgment for those who do not receive it, although the purpose of the light's coming is salvation. Lena does not intend to judge others; nothing could be further from her thoughts. But in her light, the other characters are judged as they reject her and the light she has to offer. Bunch, Mrs. Armstid, McKinley, the "Calvinist" community are all judged by the light of Lena's presence.

But certain other characters find their "salvation" as they come into contact with Lena. The image of rebirth which centers around Lena at the close of the novel constitutes

a counterpoise to the death of Christmas; the birth of her child is a focal point for the positive elements of the novel.¹⁸ Hightower's re-entry into "life" is effected by this birth. He has received the "light" by assisting at the birth. The innate good which Lena possesses can act as a catalyst upon the lives of characters with whom she comes into contact and change them to active forces for good, forces against all the adverse forces present in this novel.

Cleanth Brooks states that, in terms of the plot, Lena is the direct means by which Bunch and the indirect means by which Hightower are redeemed and brought back into the community.¹⁹ Both characters are released from their private, distorted worlds to lives of involvement in community with other men. This "salvation" occurs through their contact with the "light," Lena.

Unless the controlling purposes of the individuals are related to those that other men share, and in which the individual can participate, he is indeed isolated, and is forced to fall back upon his personal values, with all the risk of fanaticism and distortion to which such isolation is liable.²⁰

Although Faulkner associates much over "Christ" symbolism with the figure of Joe Christmas, it would seem that the real "Christ" figure, though mostly incognito and without elaborate "Christ" symbolism is Lena Grove. Like the light of John's Gospel, her presence effects judgment.

Also, like the Johannine Christ, she brings a sort of "salvation" to those who receive her. Earth mother and "virgin" mother symbolism hover about her and the nativity of her child, but the larger theme of light shows her in a fuller sense to be a sort of "Christ figure" incognito. The "light" is no author's literary device to tease meaning, as is so much of the overt "religious" symbolism. However, we must admit that Faulkner gives us no specific indication in this novel that he had ever read John's Gospel, let alone that he was building a novel about its light motif. We do see, however, the sort of "light" which both judges and "saves" proceeding from his character Lena Grove. Although there are strong currents of evil, predestination, and fate present in Light in August, in the person of Lena Grove, we see a force of "light" which enables characters to break the adverse bonds which bind them and to endure and prevail. Lena herself certainly endures throughout the novel and is apparently prevailing at its ending.

Some critics have seen an optimistic progression in Faulkner in his estimation of human nature, culminating in such apparently affirmative works as A Fable and Requiem for a Nun. Yet even before he had created a Lena, let alone a Nancy, a reformed Temple, or a confused corporal Christ figure, he had created perhaps the most noble character of

his corpus. When Lawrence Edward Bowling states that, "The Sound and the Fury is a novel about disorder, disintegration, and the absence of perspective,"²¹ we are in basic agreement with him. Quentin, captive of the past; Candace, captive of her desires; Jason, heartless "modern" man; Benjy lacking "head" - these are all victims of a meaningless and loveless world. Mrs. Compson's lack of love has set the life-style for her entire family. Yet in the midst of these characters of internal chaos stands Dilsey, the only bright spot of the novel. Hyatt Waggoner states:

But, if we turn back to the beginning of Faulkner's career, to The Sound and the Fury, we find a very similar situation and a very similar achieved meaning [as in Requiem for a Nun]. It may be, in fact, that we should think of The Sound and the Fury not as Faulkner's statement of despair but as his most effective artistic statement of "the case for Christianity." It is, indeed, Dilsey's book, and Dilsey is a greater, more sympathetic, and aesthetically more rounded and convincing Nancy.²²

In the Appendix to The Sound and the Fury, Faulkner comments about Dilsey: "They endured." Dilsey is the last character listed in the Appendix, and this comment almost seems a faint, but climactic, comment by Faulkner about his belief that the higher qualities in man can endure. Undoubtedly, Faulkner intends this comment to refer to all the noble Negro servants of the sort of Dilsey, perhaps to the Southern Negro, in general. But perhaps he also intends this

comment to apply to all kindred spirits who through fortitude of spirit endure all the adverse forces of life. Just as the comment in the Appendix is brief and conclusive, so is Dilsey's depiction in the novel. Much less space is devoted to Dilsey in the novel than to the "lost" characters, Jason, Quentin, and Benjy. But Dilsey is present throughout the novel, and the Easter morning portrayal forms a brief and conclusive comment on all the rest of the action in the novel.

Dilsey is indeed one of Faulkner's noblest characters, in our opinion, the noblest. But what qualities constitute Dilsey's nobility and endurance? Cleanth Brooks comments:

Finally Faulkner's noblest characters are willing to face the fact that most men can learn the deepest truths about themselves and about reality only through suffering. Hurt and pain and loss are not mere accidents to which the human being is subject; nor are they mere punishments incurred by human error; they can be the means to the deeper knowledge and to the more abundant life.²³

Dilsey, by her very life-situation, is in a position to suffer. Her color is black, and she is caught in the web of Compson lovelessness.²⁴ But she does not flee the situation; she does the best that she can within it. "I does de bes I kin. Lawd knows dat." Through her sufferings she achieves affirmation and truth. None of the other characters come to such a realization through their sufferings.

William R. Mueller has drawn some helpful parallels between the figure of the Suffering Servant in 11 Isaiah and Dilsey.²⁵ It is Dilsey who is the true mother to the Compson children (in striking contrast to Mrs. Compson), and it is she who in love bears all the burdens of the Compson family in patience and endurance. Dilsey serves as the protector of Candace, Benjy, and Miss Quentin. She offers her own body when Jason threatens Miss Quentin with a belt. As far as the family has a center of vicarious love, it is found in Dilsey. Mueller comments:

That the transgressions and iniquities of the Compsons are borne by Dilsey is beyond doubt. She suffers because of the Compsons, and she suffers for the Compsons in the sense that she willingly bears upon her own shoulders the burdens which are properly theirs.²⁶

It is surely Dilsey who of the novel's characters comes closest to being a Christ figure. Much Christ-figure imagery is heaped about the idiot Benjy, but he only suffers what others inflict upon him; he does not come to fuller realization through suffering; nor is he capable of exerting a positive force upon other characters. He does not endure. Dilsey is a fuller expression of the Christ incognito figure which we previously encountered in Lena Grove. Christmas and Benjy have much Christ imagery associated with them; but by their actions Lena and, to a greater extent, Dilsey

prove themselves to be the true Christ figures of their respective novels. In Dilsey we see the incarnate embodiment of Faulkner's faith in man, as expressed in his Nobel prize speech.²⁸ Compassion and sacrifice are seen in Dilsey.

Dilsey is the only center of wholeness in the novel. All the other major characters are disintegrated personalities, ruled by one dimension of their personality. Quentin is captive of a sham intellectual rationality; Jason, the villain, is also captive to a devouring and destructive rationalism,²⁹ although his is "sanity," much more pragmatic than Quentin's; Candace, in the end, is captive to her sensual drives. But Dilsey's wholeness constitutes her ability to act as a positive force against all the overwhelming adverse forces.

In Dilsey the life of the instincts, including the sex drive, the life of the emotions, and the life of ideal values and of rationality are related meaningfully to one another. To say this is to say, of course, that Dilsey is a profoundly religious person. Her life with its round of daily tasks and responsibilities is related to the larger life of eternity and eternal values. . . . Her world is a solid and meaningful world. It is filled with pain, toil, and difficulty, but it is not wrenched by agonizing doubts and perplexities.³⁰

The Easter morning scene gives us an insight into the source of Dilsey's wholeness. Fragmentation of time characterizes the novel and the lives of the "lost" characters,

especially Quentin's life. As we have before pointed out the form of The Sound and the Fury is appropriate to the world it is describing; it points to a meaninglessness of time, a disjointed, fragmented time similar to the world described in this novel. But in this brief Resurrection scene, we find a unity and meaning of time; here a meaningful order of time is presented in striking contrast to the chaotic world depicted in the rest of the novel. Quentin has searched to find meaning in chronological "clock" time, and has failed. This sort of chronological time, characteristic of Western man's conception, has lost ultimate meaning. But, in contrast to this loss of meaning in time, Dilsey's time is in nature and history and under divine control.³¹ Her conception of time would come close to Dr. Tillich's conception of "kairos."

'Kairos,' the 'fulness of time,' according to the New Testament use of the word, describes the moment in which the eternal breaks into the temporal, and the temporal is prepared to receive it. What happened in the one unique kairos, the appearance of Jesus as the Christ, i.e., as the center of history, may happen in a desired form again and again in the process of time. 32

Time is an empty form only for abstract, objective reflection, a form that can receive any kind of content [i.e., Quentin's time]; but to him who is conscious of an ongoing creative life it is laden with tensions, with possibilities and impossibilities, it is qualitative and full of significance [Dilsey's time]. 33

Thus time for Dilsey hangs together with a meaningful center in God (the kairos of the Christ) and this center breaks into her life in derivative moments of kairos to give meaning. Time is an ongoing creative life in history and in nature. Dilsey's entire life of endurance, compassion, and suffering is lived in the framework of this concept of time, but in the Resurrection morning scene, we see this fact most clearly.

The preacher's words all stream from the realization of the vision of Calvary and of "de resurrection en de light." Within the context of this "kairos," all of time in history and nature has a cohesive meaning. The past - "de generations passed away" - and the future - "dey'll come a time" - are all within an ongoing creative life with its center in God's action through the Cross. Dilsey's life has meaning because it is lived in this context of kairos; it is qualitative and full of significance within this framework of the vision of cohesive, not fragmented, meaning. All chronological events are in the hands of God³⁴ and have meaning in a conception of the time of fulfillment, the kairos.

'Whyn't you quit dat, mammy?' Frony said.
'Wid all dese people lookin. We be passin
white folks soon.' 'I've seed de first en de
last," Dilsey said. 'Never you mind me.'

'First en last whut?' Frony said.
'Never you mind,* Dilsey said. 'I seed de
beginnin, en now I sees de endin.' 35

With these concluding lines, we see that Dilsey's time is whole and capable of containing times of vision and realization (such as the Easter service). This is the context in which Faulkner's noblest character lives.

There is indeed an element of judgment in The Sound and the Fury, as there is in Light in August. Dramatically, the idiot Benjy forms a center by which the major characters can be judged by the way in which they react to him.³⁶ But it is by the Resurrection morning scene, filled with affirmative meaning, that all the rest of the disjointed action is judged. Jason's bizarre chase after Miss Quentin and his money parallels the Negro church service. These are the two climactic actions of the novel. The one affirms the rich meaning of life; the other negates it. The reader of this novel cannot avoid judging all the sins, shortcomings, and failures to achieve meaning of the Compson family in the light of the Resurrection morning scene and in reference to its chief character Dilsey and her great compassionate vision; Faulkner intends this judgment in a dramatic sense. Why else would he place this brief scene, the most meaning-charged one of the novel, near the end of the novel in such a position that all that has been read

before is judged in its light? Judgment thus comes in a brief flash of artistic brilliance, in the Resurrection affirmation. Some would rightly remark that this scene has no real organic connection with the rest of the novel; they are correct in that this scene does not belong to the meaningless, fragmented world of the Compson's. But with an astute artistic device, Faulkner forces his reader to finally evaluate all the previous action of the novel in relation to this positive standard.

In conclusion, we must remember that Faulkner has given us a complex picture of life in Sanctuary, Light in August, and in The Sound and the Fury. We must be quite careful not to assign to the writer himself any one of these life-views. Faulkner is not Quentin; nor is he Horace Benbow, Lena Grove, or Dilsey Gibson. But something of the writer's experience is undoubtedly in each of these characters, and he may use each character to give his reader a certain perspective on life. We concur with Hyatt Waggoner when he asserts that such a book as The Sound and the Fury makes more sense when it is taken as a portrayal, diagnosis, and judgment of an age than it does when taken as a simple confession of despair by its author.³⁷ Faulkner does use his art to comment upon an age, but we must complement this statement with an affirmation of the realization of the

author's being tied up in most of his major characters - in both their captivity to sin and fate and in their enduring and prevailing. I am convinced that Faulkner has felt with his major characters in their perception of life; otherwise he could not so expertly subject his reader to these characters' experiences. There is an immediacy of experience in his art that far surpasses mere description of objects outside the author's realm of experience. Richard H. Rovere comments:

With a writer like Faulkner, though, when we respond to him at all, we do not so much observe experience as undergo it. We do not recognize a mood; we are overcome by it. . . . It is often impossible to feel for Faulkner's characters, but it is almost always possible to feel with them.³⁸

Thus the novels of Faulkner must be experience-centered for the reader. And it is in part the experience of the author that the reader enters into. Evil, fate, compassion, endurance, nobility, freedom - all these characterize parts of the experience of the writer.

And this world of experience is on the whole a moral world in which adverse forces and constructive moral forces are in combat. It is a strangely complex sort of world, a world in which no one ideology or world force gains the day completely. Good and evil are strangely intermixed in all the action, situations, and in most of the major characters.

And when one character seems righteous (a Dilsey), his world view is seriously in conflict with sinister forces. Very few matters are absolutely resolved in this world of Jasons and of Dilseys. Even Jason is not a character of complete evil; such a character could not convince, delight, or even horrify as does Jason.³⁹ Nor has Dilsey reared her own progeny in such a manner that they will exactly rise up and call her blessed. No easy rationale is offered for evil forces in Faulkner's writings; these forces are simply left in conflict with positive forces. Nor is triumph assured for "the right" in this life; Sanctuary is witness to the power of evil. The Christian faith has not ever had any easy explanation to explain away evil; it has always admitted that evil is very much a part of this world. Faulkner's conception of the world (excluding the strain of blind fatalism, which in reality coalesces with what we have termed adverse forces) corresponds very closely with that of the Christian faith. Both express what we might term "Christian realism." E. Cherbonnier comments:

Perhaps the most basic point at which the Bible [and we would maintain, on the whole, Faulkner's writings] differs from both the morality play and from tragedy is its denial that all of life's calamities can be given a convenient rationale. As opposed to the morality play, it acknowledges a residue of evil and suffering which cannot be included within the neat scheme of poetic justice. As

opposed to tragedy, it does not seek to reconcile the spectator to them by persuading him that they are necessary . . . The Bible therefore goes out of its way to insist on the actuality of evil, not in terms of simple blacks and whites . . . but of complex shades of gray.⁴⁰

We must maintain that Faulkner's world-view, as presented in his novels is neither that of tragedy - the Dilseys, Lenas, Nancys, etc - prevent this - nor of a morality play - evil always remains. In this world-view, Faulkner is essentially a Christian realist. The Christian description of man's earthly condition must ring true for Faulkner. This fact, however, does not mean that Faulkner is himself a Christian; nor does it even necessitate his trying to convey Christian ideas through his art.

Finally, the novels of Faulkner present to the reader a world of conflict between good and evil, a complex world, which we have called "Christian realistic." Grace is hard to perceive in the world of fatalistic tragedy or of humanistic moralism; but its perception should be easier in the realistic Christian world which Faulkner places before his reader. The real world is often ambiguous in its meanings, So also is grace. We cannot expect the grace of God in the real world to be neatly labelled and packaged. Faulkner does not attempt to dispense grace in his writings.

He may be guilty of great ambiguity, but he is not guilty of over simply presenting grace in his dramatic action. Warren Beck, speaking of the continuing conflict of good and evil in the Snopes trilogy, well characterizes the complexity of the novels we have been examining and the Faulkner corpus in general:

Herein is the real complexity (in this conflict) of all Faulkner's work, but especially of the Snopes saga as human tragicomedy.⁴¹

NOTES: CHAPTER 3

47. ¹Michael Millgate, Faulkner (Edinburgh, 1961), p.
- ²Peter Swiggart, "Two Faulkner Critics," The Sewanee Review, LXII, Number 4 (Autumn, 1954), p. 699.
- ³William Faulkner, Light in August (New York, 1932), pp. 296, 297.
- ⁴Robert L. Dorsch, "An Interpretation of the Central Themes in the Work of William Faulkner," The Emporia State Research Studies, XI (September, 1962), p. 18.
- ⁵Cleanth Brooks, The Hidden God (New Haven, 1963), p. 37.
- ⁶Faulkner, op. cit., p. 264.
- ⁷William Van O'Connor, William Faulkner (Minneapolis, 1959), p. 22.
- ⁸Faulkner, op. cit., p. 406.
- ⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰Millgate, op. cit., p. 50.
- ¹¹William Van O'Connor, The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner (Minneapolis, 1954), pp. 83, 84.
- ¹²Millgate, op. cit., pp. 47, 48.
- ¹³Faulkner, op. cit., p. 6.
- ¹⁴Brooks, op. cit., p. 39.
- ¹⁵Ibid., p. 35.

- ¹⁶Faulkner, op. cit., p. 6.
- ¹⁷Ibid., p. 18.
- ¹⁸Millgate, op. cit., p. 48.
- ¹⁹Brooks, op. cit., p. 40.
- ²⁰Ibid., pp. 39, 40.
- ²¹Lawrence Edward Bowling, "Faulkner: Techniques of The Sound and the Fury," The Kenyon Review, X, Number 4, (Autumn, 1948), p. 565.
- ²²Nathan A. Scott, Jr., (ed.) The Tragic Vision and the Christian Faith (New York, 1957), p. 314.
- ²³Brooks, op. cit., p. 43.
- ²⁴Lawrence Edward Bowling, "Faulkner and the Theme of Innocence," The Kenyon Review, XX, Number 3 (Summer, 1958), p. 481.
- ²⁵Vide William R. Mueller, The Prophetic Voice in Modern Fiction (New York, 1959), pp. 110-135.
- ²⁶Mueller, op. cit., p. 133.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 132.
- ²⁸Ibid., p. 135.
- ²⁹Brooks, op. cit., p. 41.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 42.
- ³¹John W. Hunt, William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension (Syracuse, New York, 1965), p. 95.
- ³²Paul Tillich, The Protestant Era (Chicago, 1948),
XV.

³³Ibid., p. 33.

³⁴Hunt, op. cit., p. 95.

³⁵William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury, The Faulkner Reader (New York, 1958), p. 220.

³⁶Hunt, op. cit., p. 90.

³⁷Scott (ed.) op. cit., p. 315.

³⁸Richard H. Rovere, "Introduction," Light in August (The Modern Library, New York, 1932), vi.

³⁹Hunt, op. cit., p. 78.

⁴⁰Scott, (ed.) op. cit., p. 46.

⁴¹Warren Beck, Man in Motion (Madison, Wisconsin, 1961), p. 12.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION: GRACE IN FAULKNER'S CHARACTERS

Before we analyze the presentation of grace in Faulkner's works, we must decide where to look, and we must attempt to gain some further perspective into Faulkner as a person and into his work. We immediately run into some difficulty in this respect; there is real tension (if not contradiction) between many of Faulkner's public statements as a person and his world-view expressed in his writings. We have decided that dramatically and artistically Faulkner's writings present a world which is essentially interpreted in orthodox Christian perspective; this is a world in which many a reader should find events pointing to God's grace.

But when Faulkner speaks abstractly, apart from his art, a confusing picture develops. We have already referred to his statement upon receiving the Nobel Prize. This asserts, we believe, a basic and vital theme of all his works: Faulkner's belief in "the old verities and truths of the heart" - "love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice" - as the spiritual means by which

man is capable of enduring and prevailing in a world filled with adverse forces. This statement is certainly open to a biblical and Christian interpretation. But it is also open to a purely humanistic rendering. We must let this essential theme of the "old verities and truths of the heart," as stated by Faulkner stand as a valid interpretation of most of his work. But when we listen to his other public pronouncements apart from his art, in an attempt to probe more deeply into the nature of these qualities of the heart as expressed in his art, we are in real trouble. It becomes graphically clear that Faulkner is an artist, not a theologian or a metaphysician. In fact, his statements prove that he is quite confused when he rationally attempts to verbalize in theological statements. At one time, Faulkner has specifically identified himself as a humanist.¹ He has said that his belief man will prevail "is like the belief one has in God, Buddha, or whatever his particular abettor might be."² This puts his humanism in a theistic framework in a sense, but it leaves us able only to draw the vaguest conclusions. He has also spoken in words characteristic of a naturalistic deism of Thomas Paine:³ "To me, a proof of God is in the firmament, the stars."⁴ We will also make bold and place A Fable in the same category as these public utterances. It seems that in this late work, most of the creative tension of Faulkner's great

period has left his work. Faulkner's attempt to become a theologian-philosopher, rather than an artist, comes to the forefront in this essentially unfortunate work. Dynamic tension has left us in A Fable because it seems as if the author is attempting to force his art into his vague, ill-defined philosophical-theological system of his "rational" consciousness. And his reader suffers. We accordingly feel justified in placing this novel in the same category as Faulkner's other overt attempts to verbalize "rationally" his theology and metaphysics. His view of Christianity in this novel seems similar to that expressed in the following statement in the Spring issue of the Paris Review of 1956 in which he defined Christianity as a:

code of behavior by means of which (man)
makes himself a better human being than
his nature wants to be, if he follows
his nature only.

Hyatt Waggoner is quite astute when he remarks about A Fable that "there is something very reminiscent of nineteenth-century rationalism in this recent book of Faulkner's: it would seem to be trying to take us back to 'the simple gospel of Jesus.'" ⁵ This "simple gospel" almost lacks a theistic element.

What are we to make of these vague and apparently contradictory statements of the man Faulkner about his "philosophy"? In the first place, it is certain that

Faulkner's mind in these statements is not a highly developed one theologically; it exhibits a high degree of "native American naivete." In his statements, he ranges himself from deist to almost atheistic humanist. And he does not seem to sense any contradiction in these muddled statements. We certainly find no developed notion of God's grace in these statements; from these verbalizations, it would appear that our writer did not even think in terms of redemption and grace. If there is a God of the stars and of the universe, he has left it to man's own heart to give himself the sustenance to endure. Or this God has given man a moral system called Christianity (a rather ill-defined one, it would seem from these statements) by which man by his own powers can transcend his natural impulses. This is not apparently a world sustained by the present grace of God.

On the other hand, we cannot resolve the question quite so easily. It is difficult to write Faulkner off, even judging his statements apart from his art, as a humanist pure and simple or as an anti-religious skeptic, or as a skeptical deist. Faulkner displays an innate distrust of "natural" man and of his abilities. In his public statements, Faulkner is ever calling on man to rise above his natural instincts by his own resources - or can we stop here?

F. W. Dillistone comments:

For if anything is certain it is that Faulkner has no confidence in man as he exists in his merely natural state, or as he seeks to extend his dominion over the world by merely natural agencies. The all-important thing is the development of a moral consciousness, and nothing is more powerful to produce this than a story of courage and faith and sacrifice. But what, may we ask, creates either the deed or the story? If it is not a natural agency, it must, in some sense, be a more than natural agency, a spiritual agency.⁶

When Faulkner states that man "has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance," what does he mean by theologically the terms "soul" and "spirit"? These terms more or less imply a source of power somehow outside of their own reference, but all is vague. Faulkner gives us no real clue in his pronouncements about this outside source. If we postulate a belief on Faulkner's part in a force, a God, who sustains man's spirit, we could also postulate some undefined notion of grace in his thought. But to draw these conclusions, we have gone one step further than Faulkner himself has explicitly gone in his "meta-physical-theological" statements. And such a conclusion may well be the wrong one. We are forced to conclude from Faulkner's statements that he is not a philosopher or a theologian; when he tries to be, he only has a quite nebulous notion of a God and does not speak explicitly at all in terms of grace.

It would seem that our analysis of grace in Faulkner must come to a close here. But we must ask ourselves if the examples of endurance, compassion, and sacrifice in Faulkner's art demand that we preclude any notion of grace in these writings. Faulkner speaks more clearly of his art than he is accustomed to do of his "religion" when in Writers at Work (1958) he says:

Not moral problems, not metaphysical problems constitute the artist's essential business. Rather he must be concerned with the creation of believable people in credible moving situations.⁷

And it must be to these "believable people" in Faulkner's works that we must turn again in our discussion of grace in his writings. In doing such, we do not claim Faulkner as a Christian who is deliberately presenting God's grace to his reader; such a technique would be impossible after our consideration of what he has said apart from his art. But if Faulkner honestly fulfills his purpose of creating "believable people" in honest life situations, we are quite honest in looking to his art, to his life-creation for grace. Furthermore, we have concluded earlier that something of the writer's own experience must somehow be in these depth expressions of life; perhaps Mr. Faulkner was more of a Christian experiencing God's grace than he realized, or at least more than he cared to admit to himself or to his

public. The complex world he has created in his works, as we have previously concluded, is basically orthodox Christian in its presentation. Hyatt Waggoner states:

A great deal of Faulkner's work is interpretable in Christian terms, and some of it seems impossible to interpret rightly in any other terms.⁸

We must concur. Our attempt to "psychoanalyze" Mr. Faulkner has been a necessary prelude for fuller understanding of just what sort of matter we are dealing with, but in the end any such attempt is bound to be futile when carried too far. Again, we must concur with Waggoner:

And the effect of this kind of perception is to send us from the man to his works, from an attempt (unlikely to be successful, and involving even what is perhaps a certain impertinence) to untangle the threads of Faulkner's personal religion to an attempt to find out what the novels and stories themselves mean.⁹

But before we turn to the novels, we must consider one more matter which may make our dealing with the material more beneficial. Faulkner, as a writer, is quite concerned with myths. Motifs of pagan myths are found in his writings; Faulkner clusters pagan imagery around Eula Varner in The Hamlet which delights the reader:

. . . her entire appearance suggested some symbology out of the Old Dionysiac times - honey in sunlight and bursting grapes, the writhen bleeding of the crushed fecundated vine beneath the hard rapacious trampling goat-hoof. ¹⁰ (Hamlet, 95)

We have already alluded to the use of the earth mother motif in a more serious vein especially in connection with Lena Grove; here the use seems to ring true to the author's own experience. Many critics have found many pagan motifs in Faulkner's works. But there seem to be even more uses of Christian myths; many of these we can't even take seriously - Faulkner is just playing. At other times he would seem to be seriously using these myths for meaningful presentation of life; naming a few characters of this usage, we recall Benjy, Christmas, Cash, Isaac McCaslin, Lena (virgin mother). Faulkner presents others of his characters in such a way that they base their lives on the Christian myth - Dilsey, Nancy Mannigoe. We are on firm ground when we state that Faulkner uses Christian myth to deepen and to enrich his novels, to give them meaning and form;¹¹ when we probe more deeply as to his relation to these myths, we are on shakier ground. Yet I think we can say that Faulkner is in some sort of dialogue with these Christian myths; he is obsessed with them and apparently they have some meaning quotient for him. The characters who most profoundly show forth his compassionate qualities of the heart base their lives on the Christian message - Ike McCaslin (the motif of expiation), Nancy (Requiem for a Nun), and above all Dilsey. The author is trying to affirm something in these characters. However, from Faulkner's statements, we must follow Hyatt

Waggoner's lead and place Faulkner with Lawyer Stevens, in sympathy with believers but himself unable to affirm.¹²

As unable as we are to speak definitively about Faulkner's relation to the Christian myth as presented in his works, we cannot completely agree with those of an "impersonal" school who would see Faulkner as merely using Christian myth.¹³ He uses it, but in his deeper use of it in which live experience is transmitted in his art, we must conclude that Faulkner somehow in his own experience has been moved, has himself been used, by the Christian message. At any rate, its story of compassion and sacrifice have captured Mr. Faulkner. We are once more in no man's land (as we were in our analysis of Faulkner's religion) when we attempt to probe too deeply within the complex person of the author to see how he really stands in relation to the myth he so often employs.

Faulkner's art, contrary to his public "quasi-deist" statements, is at times quite capable of presenting life in the deeper dimensions of redemption, expiation, and possibly even of grace. As we have postulated earlier, Faulkner's later work seems more contrived, less tension-filled than his earlier works. Nevertheless, we cannot completely pass by Requiem for a Nun, a work of this later period (which seems at times to border on melodrama) if we are to comprehensively

examine possible situations of grace in Faulkner's writings. Faulkner chose evidently to use the categories of sin and redemption in this novel instead of the tools of moral example and of the "liberal Christ" figure of A Fable.

Amos Wilder comments:

In Requiem for a Nun, the sequel of Sanctuary, we have one of the most authentic and searching Christian dramas in modern literature. . . . It offers us a study in pride and contrition, in vicarious sacrifice and forgiveness . . . The pride of a Southern belle, Temple Drake, is inexorably probed and sifted by God and the Devil . . . in a long scene which represents no less than the threshing out of a naked soul before the divine throne. The paradox appears in the fact that the instrument of redemption is a Negro Magdalen, drug addict, and household drudge. The import of the whole spiritual transaction is connected with the unlikely human instruments involved.¹⁴

The artistic failures of this novel prevent us from concurring with Dr. Wilder's judgment that it is one of "the most authentic and searching Christian dramas in modern literature." Lines like the following come close to melodrama and to an awkward overtiness in art which stifles true meaning:

Temple: . . . So good can come out of evil.
Stevens: It not only can, it must.¹⁵

Nevertheless, in Nancy, Faulkner presents a character in the state of grace and apparently able to be a vehicle of grace. Like Lena and Dilsey, she is a quite unlikely recipient

of grace - "the murderess, the nigger, the dopefiend whore," as Temple describes her. But at the hour of her death she is experiencing and anticipating salvation. She fervently believes in the person of Christ - not so much in his teaching or in doctrine surrounding him. She knows she is a helpless sinner.

You can't help it. And He knows that. But you can suffer. And he knows that too. He dont tell you not to sin, He just asks you not to. And He don't tell you to suffer. But He gives you the chance. He gives you the best He can think of, that you are capable of doing. And He will save you.¹⁶

When asked by Stevens if a murderess can be in heaven, Nancy simply replies, "I can work." Knowing herself to be a sinner, she throws herself on Christ's mercy and salvation. Her example of self-sacrifice (ironically a murder to protect the child) is unfolded to Temple as the very act from which her own salvation may proceed. And her parting exhortations to Temple to "Believe" offer to Temple the way to grace and salvation. Nancy has been the possible vehicle of grace for Temple's salvation. Temple realizes her sin and the need of her human condition; yet the novel ends on an unresolved note.

Temple (walking): 'Anyone to save it. Anyone who wants it. If there is none, I'm sunk. We all are. Doomed. Damned.'

Stevens (walking): 'Of course we are. Hasn't He been telling us that for going on two thousand years?' ¹⁷

But in a sense Temple's life has been redeemed by the actions of the Negro dopefiend whore; Gowan is waiting for her and a new life for them is presumably beginning. This is a novel whose major motifs are sin, damnation, salvation, grace - quite consciously and overtly so in fact.

In Nancy, Faulkner has given us another character in the tradition of Lena and Dilsey in which grace abounds in simple faith and self-sacrifice. Amos Wilder states:

We learn here (in Faulkner's writings) to recognize the incognitos of God. Faulkner seems to be saying that there are many nuns not in habits, and many apostles who have not been ordained, and who would not presume. He knows how to present the baneful legacy of a fossilized religion and of a secularized Christian society, but he can also demonstrate the perennial vigor of the faith in redeeming those very ills.¹⁸

And it is largely to Dr. Wilder's fine article that I owe the debt of the idea of "grace incognito" as a continuing motif in Faulkner's writings. Coupled with the previously mentioned concept of "inversion," in "grace incognito", we have the framework through which grace may shine in Faulkner's works. We have previously mentioned that in the Biblical tradition culminating in Christ, we perceive God's grace shining through the lowly, apparently incapable, and least likely characters. Is it any wonder really, that in Faulkner's writings, grace's vehicles are likely to be Negroes, young men, pregnant white trash?

We have previously examined in some detail the characters, Lena Grove and Dilsey. We concluded that indeed they were free agents, that they were not held captive by the forces of fate or evil. Their lives, along with Nancy of Requiem for a Nun, display the true verities of the heart - compassion, self-sacrifice, endurance. But their personalities, in all three cases, are lacking any moralism. They do not strive to obtain their inner qualities by moral perfection. On the whole, Faulkner presents his "moral strivers" in quite a different light; they are the "Calvinists," the Joanna Burdens, the Grannys, the McEacherns, the Coras; the list could well be continued. But these people are more damned than they are in a state of grace. Those who strive for what Faulkner would consider a true morality, (and with whom he probably personally identifies), the Horace Benbows and the Gavin Stevens, carry on an admirable battle for the old verities of the heart. But we see no decisive salvation, personal or social, in their conflicts. Like the Faulkner of the "philosophical-theological" writings, these characters live in a world in which the term "grace" seems out of place. But Faulkner has created another group of characters which live in a tension-filled world of grace and redemption. In the characters of Lena, Dilsey, and Nancy, we see grace operative in a realistic Christian world.

We must now turn to a contemporary theologian to aid us in our analysis of these three characters, the conveyors of grace incognito. D. M. Baillie, speaking of the paradox of grace, asserts:

Its essence lies in the conviction which a Christian man possesses, that every good thing in him, every good thing he does, is somehow not wrought by himself but by God. This is a highly paradoxical conviction, for in ascribing all to God, it does not abrogate human personality nor disclaim personal responsibility. Never is human action more truly and fully personal, never does the agent feel more perfectly free, than in those moments of which he can say as a Christian that whatever good was in them was not his but God's.¹⁹

Faulkner does not disclaim human personality in Lena, Dilsey, and Nancy. They are believable human characters who struggle with the adversities of life. They are not helplessly led to grace and glory by some overpowering force which takes away their free will; these characters of grace do not correspond in this respect to the doomed characters of fate in the Faulkner corpus. Grace is not presented in Faulkner's writings with the same predetermination and fatalism as the damnation of a Quentin Compson. This is indeed fortunate; grace abounds in the context of a free will and a human personality. In fact Faulkner uses the very human personality and free will of Lena, Dilsey, and Nancy as his strongest force for the old verities of the heart in

opposition to fate and pervasive evil which would deprive man of his freedom and send him helplessly to his doom. Faulkner employs these three characters as three of his prime examples of human personality prevailing against all that would destroy it by means of heart and spirit which show compassion and self-sacrifice.

However, the second impression which strikes the reader concerning these three characters is their lack of personal dominance, their failure to actively strive after the good, if you will their placidity and passivity. They are not busybodies for the kingdom. We have alluded previously to the "naturalness" of Lena Grove. Neither is Dilsey an "activist for God;" grace is experienced for her in her normal life, in the back-breaking tasks she faithfully performs. The grace of the vision of Resurrection morning is not something she strives for; it is a gift that she humbly through faith receives. Nancy fervently screams "Believe," but from all indications hers has not been a life of human striving after good. She has experienced deliverance from sin. The very act of grace, the murder, is an act which contradicts the social code of good of the human society. Grace seems to flow naturally and freely through all three characters. They would claim no merit or credit on their own parts for their goodness. The most Dilsey and Nancy would claim would be the true assertion that

they have worked. Lena, Dilsey, and Nancy could all exclaim with St. Paul:

By the grace of God I am what I am . . .
Yet not I, but the grace of God which
was with me.²⁰

Or with St. Augustine, they could say:

What meaneth this: 'I laboured more, Yet not I?'
Where the will exalted itself ever so little,
there piety was instantly on the watch, and
humility trembled, because infirmity confessed
all the truth.²¹

These characters, the humble outcasts of a decadent white aristocratic society, would claim little for themselves; yet they are the very signs and channels for grace.

These three characters all possess a simple, practical faith in God. Lena "reckons the Lord will see to that." Dilsey, through the eyes of simple faith, sees the beginning and the ending. Nancy cries, "I don't know. I believes." Lena's simple trust in God leads her to trust in her fellow men. It would seem that Dilsey and Nancy would trust more in God than in their fellows. But the dynamic of all three characters' lives is not rooted in humanistic principles, but in childlike trust in a transcendent, loving God. Consequently they are not so concerned with their own endurance and prevailing. They endure and prevail in the truest sense, by living lives freed for sacrifice for others.

Consequently I think we are justified in speaking of

Lena, Dilsey, and Nancy, as they are artistically and dramatically presented by Faulkner, as channels through which God's grace flows. The dynamic of the combination of fullness of personality (free will) and "not I but the grace of God" are both presented by Faulkner in each of these characters. Consequently they are mirrors for God's grace. Faulkner often teeters precariously on the brink of misuse of Crucifixion symbolism; he plays with it at times. But in these "incognitos of God"²² we see his fullest and truest use of Crucifixion symbolism, not in literary symbols, but in actions. The obsession of Faulkner with the Cross bears artistic and "theological" fruit in these three characters. God's grace is here seen in love, compassion, and self-sacrifice - the meaning of the grace of The Cross. In these characters, in his art, Faulkner has lifted his old verities of the heart from their humanistic captivity to the realm of grace.

In the midst of a disjointed, estranged world are tokens of grace in Faulkner's writings. Paul Tillich writes:

Grace does not create a being who is unconnected with the one who receives grace. Grace does not destroy essential freedom; but it does what freedom under the conditions of existence cannot do, namely, it reunites the estranged.²³

In these characters of simple faith, we see a reuniting of the estranged with God; their unity through trust with God

constitutes their very personhood, their very freedom. These characters, as we have seen previously in our examination, are free from self and from estrangement; consequently they are agents to overcome estrangement between other men. God's grace acting through their total personhood reunites the estranged on the human level. And this re-unification occurs through Christ-like acts of self-sacrificing love. Dilsey is the one factor in the Compson world which reunites the estranged. The whore murderess Nancy is the one redemptive agent which presents Temple with the option of reunification with God and which reunites her with her husband. From the transparent Lena (probably the least-developed person of the three) comes the "light," the grace to reunite Bunch and Hightower with human society. Hightower is taught that passive charity is not enough; he must receive "the light" and act in community.

We cannot fully concur with Cleanth Brooks when he states:

The concept of grace, for example, is either lacking or at least not clearly evident in Faulkner's work.²⁴

Grace does not hit one in the face in Faulkner's world; nor does it usually in life. But among all the adverse forces and impotent moralism, William Faulkner offers his reader a vision of "grace incognito." In the three characters who so

well illustrate the principle of "inversion" we see a life-dynamic grounded in a loving God which shows forth the grace of the Cross. To the world of Christ's day, undoubtedly the Cross was also "grace incognito." We would finally concur with Hyatt Waggoner in stating:

The Faulknerian universe, then, is a universe in which sin and suffering, redemption and damnation, the way of faith and the way of faithfulness, are the really decisive categories.²⁵

The Faulknerian world in total retrospect may seem to be more one of tragic fate, damnation, and sin than it is of redemption and grace. (So may our world.) But it is not a world void of grace, and it is a world which finally must be judged and evaluated in the light of the characters of grace. Basically for a Christian, Faulkner's world is a real world.

Gustaf Aulén offers a statement which perhaps will help us to view our previous statements that Lena and Dilsey are agents of judgment in the light of our statements about grace.²⁶

In relation to evil, therefore, divine power appears under a double aspect: as grace and as judgment. In grace evil is overcome and compelled to serve the purpose of the divine will. In the judgment of condemnation the unconquered evil encounters divine sovereignty.²⁷

The reader is led to judge the other characters and events

of the novels in relation to Faulkner's characters of grace. Dilsey's world of Resurrection morning means judgment for the Compson world. The light which proceeds from Lena Grove causes the "Calvinist" world to stand naked and judged. Temple's "polite" world is judged by the redemptive cries of Nancy. Thus dramatically and artistically grace and judgment hang together in Faulkner's writings. And the characters who transmit both are open to divine power, the source of both.

As our preceding chapters prove, grace is not the whole story in the writings of Faulkner; at times (one could claim at most times) Faulkner's world seems in the throes of evil and fate. But Faulkner has dramatically and artistically provided his reader with brilliant flashes of grace, which seem difficult to equal in any other contemporary novels. Hyatt Waggoner correctly states:

We may say that the terms in which experience is analyzed (in Faulkner's writings) are such as to make the historic Christian answers to the questions implicitly raised seem pertinent and natural.²⁸

We do not find grace where we would expect to find it in Faulkner's writings. "Grace incognito" in characters who display the qualities of "inversion" is present, however. Where else would one find grace in a writer who in many respects writes in a Biblical tradition? These

characters are the very agents to pass judgment on those structures in which one would expect to find grace. Faulkner undoubtedly concurs with Gail Hightower in his judgment on the "whiteman's church."

It seems to him that he has seen it all the while; that that which is destroying the Church is not the outward groping of those within it nor the inward groping of those without, but the professionals who control it and who have removed the bells from its steeples. He seems to see them, endless, without order, empty, symbolical, bleak, skypointed not with ecstasy or passion but in adjuration, threat and doom. He seems to see the churches of the world like a rampart, like one of those barricades of the middleages planted with dead and sharpened stakes, against truth and against that peace in which to sin and be forgiven which is the life of man.²⁹

Here seems to be an eloquent statement which accuses much of the institution of being an instrument hindering grace.

But Faulkner has also used a church setting as his most eloquent testimony to a vision of regnum gloriae.³⁰ The Easter Resurrection, as it is observed in a believing congregation of earth's outcasts, finds a community a grace participating in the vision of the hope of glory. We must close with lines which, in my opinion, are the most memorable of the Faulkner corpus.

'O blind sinner! Breddren, I tells you; sistuhn,
I says to you, when de Lawd did turn His
mighty face, say, Aint gwine overload heaven!
I can see de widowed God shet His do'; I sees

de whelmin blood roll between; I sees de
darkness en de death everlastin upon de
generations. Den, lò! Breddren! Yes, breddren!
Whut I see? Whut I see, O sinner? I sees de
resurrection en de light; sees de meek Jesus
saying Dey kilt Me dat ye shall live again;
I died dat dem whut sees en believes shall
never die. Breddren, O breddren! I sees de
doom crack en hears de golden horns shoutin
down de glory, en de arisen dead whut got de
blood en de ricklickshun of de Lamb.' 31

NOTES: CHAPTER 4

¹Robert A. Jelliffe (ed.), Faulkner at Nagano (Tokyo, 1956), p. 95., cited in John W. Hunt, William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension (Syracuse, New York, 1965), p. 18.

²Ibid., p. 27 cited in John W. Hunt, William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension, p. 18.

³John W. Hunt, William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension (Syracuse, New York, 1965), p. 18.

⁴Robert A. Jelliffe (ed.), Faulkner at Nagano, cited in John W. Hunt, op. cit., p. 18.

⁵Nathan A. Scott, Jr. (ed.), The Tragic Vision and the Christian Faith (New York, 1957), p. 309.

⁶F. W. Dillistone, The Novelist and the Passion Story (London, 1960), pp. 111, 112.

⁷William Faulkner, Writers at Work cited in F. W. Dillistone, The Novelist and the Passion Story, p. 93.

⁸Scott (ed.) op. cit., p. 313.

⁹Ibid., p. 312.

¹⁰William Faulkner, The Hamlet (New York, 1931), p. 95.

¹¹Scott, (ed.) op. cit., p. 312.

¹²Ibid., p. 314.

¹³Contra Waggoner in Scott, (ed.) op. cit., pp. 312, 313.

¹⁴Amos N. Wilder, Theology and Modern Literature (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 130, 131.

¹⁵William Faulkner, Requiem for a Nun (New York, 1931), p. 293.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 332.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 336.

¹⁸Wilder, op. cit., p. 131.

¹⁹D. M. Baillie, God Was In Christ (London, 1956), p. 114.

²⁰1 Corinthians XV, 10.

²¹De gest. Pelag. cc. 35 seq. cited in D. M. Baillie, God Was In Christ, p. 114.

²²Wilder, op. cit., p. 131.

²³Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Volume II (Chicago, 1957), p. 79.

²⁴Cleanth Brooks, The Hidden God (New Haven, 1963), p. 25.

²⁵Scott (ed.) op. cit., p. 318.

²⁶Nancy is no less the agent by which the world of Requiem for a Nun is judged than are Lena and Dilsey in their respective novels. This fact of judgment is pointed out graphically in the similarities between Temple and Nancy. The one whore has experienced forgiveness; the other has not fully come to this realization.

²⁷Gustaf Aulen, The Faith of the Christian Church (New Haven, 1963), p. 127.

²⁸Scott (ed.) op. cit., p. 318.

²⁹William Faulkner, Light in August (New York, 1932), pp. 426, 427.

³⁰The "resurrection" in Light in August, with its ties to Easter, centers around the birth of Lena's child; this event is also a testimony to a "resurrection" vision in Faulkner which is, however, not directly related to a Christian community.

³¹William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury, The Faulkner Reader (New York, 1958), p. 220.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aulén, Gustaf. The Faith of the Christian Church. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963.
- Baillie, D. M. God Was In Christ. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1956.
- Beck, Warren. Man in Motion. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1961.
- Bowling, Lawrence Edward. "Faulkner and the Theme of Innocence," The Kenyon Review, XX, Number 3, (Summer, 1958), 466-487.
- _____. "Faulkner: Techniques of The Sound and the Fury," The Kenyon Review, X, Number 4 (Autumn, 1948), 552-566.
- Bradford, M. E. "Faulkner among the Puritans," The Sewanee Review, LXXII, Number 1 (Winter, 1964), 146-150.
- Brooks, Cleanth. "Faulkner's Sanctuary: The Discovery of Evil," The Sewanee Review, LXXI, Number 1 (Winter, 1963), 1-24.
- _____. The Hidden God. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963.
- _____. "Notes on Faulkner's Light in August," The Harvard Advocate, CXXXV (November, 1951), 10-12, 27.
- Coughlan, Robert. The Private World of William Faulkner. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953.
- Cross, F. L. (ed.) The Oxford Dictionary of The Christian Church. London: Oxford University Press, 1958.
- Cullen, John B. Old Times in the Faulkner Country. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1961.

- Dillistone, F. W. The Novelist and the Passion Story.
London: Collins, 1960.
- Dorsch, Robert L. "An Interpretation of the Central Themes
in the Work of William Faulkner," The Emporia
State Research Studies, XI (September, 1962), 5-
42.
- Emmanuel, Pierre. "Faulkner and the Sense of Sin," The
Harvard Advocate, CXXXV (November, 1951), 20.
- Faulkner, John. My Brother Bill. New York: Pocket Books,
Inc., 1963.
- Faulkner, William. Absalom, Absalom! New York: Random
House (The Modern Library, 1936.
- _____. As I Lay Dying. New York: Vintage Books, 1930.
- _____. "Barn Burning," The Faulkner Reader. New York:
Random House, 1958, 499-516.
- _____. "The Bear," The Faulkner Reader. New York:
Random House, 1958, 253-352.
- _____. "Dry September," The Faulkner Reader. New York:
Random House, 1958, 517-527.
- _____. A Fable. New York: Random House, 1950.
- _____. The Hamlet. New York: Vintage Books, 1931.
- _____. Light in August. New York: Random House, 1932.
- _____. The Mansion, New York: Random House, 1955.
- _____. "Nobel Prize Address," The Faulkner Reader. New
York: Random House, 1958, 3, 4.
- _____. Requiem for a Nun (with Sanctuary). New York:
The New American Library (A Signet Book), 1931,
179-336.
- _____. "A Rose for Emily," The Faulkner Reader. New
York: Random House, 1958, 489-497.
- _____. Sanctuary. New York: Random House, 1931.

Faulkner, William. "Shingles for the Lord," The Faulkner Reader. New York: Random House, 1958, 575-587.

_____. The Sound and the Fury. The Faulkner Reader. New York: Random House, 1958, 5-251.

_____. "That Evening Sun," The Faulkner Reader. New York: Random House, 1958, 529-545.

_____. The Unvanquished. New York: The New American Library (A Signet Classic), 1934.

Gavin, Jerome. "Light in August: The Act of Involvement," The Harvard Advocate, CXXXV (November, 1951), 14, 15, 34-37.

Hamilton, Edith. The Ever-Present Past. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1964.

Hoffman, Frederick J. and Vickery, Olga W. (eds.) William Faulkner: Two Decades of Criticism. East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1951.

Hunt, John W. William Faulkner: Art in Theological Tension. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1965.

Kazin, Alfred. "Faulkner's Vision of Human Integrity," The Harvard Advocate, CXXXV (November, 1951), 8, 9, 28-33.

Killinger, John. The Failure of Theology in Modern Literature. New York: Abingdon Press, 1963.

Lytle, Andrew. "Faulkner's A Fable," The Sewanee Review, LXIII, Number 1 (Winter, 1955), 114-137.

_____. "The Town: Helen's Last Stand," The Sewanee Review, LXV, Number 3 (Summer, 1957), 475-484.

Millgate, Michael. Faulkner. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961.

Moseley, Edwin M. Pseudonyms of Christ in the Modern Novel. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962.

Mueller, William R. The Prophetic Voice in Modern Fiction. New York: Association Press, 1959.

O'Connor, William Van. "The State of Faulkner Criticism," The Sewanee Review, LX, Number 1 (Winter, 1952), 180-186.

_____. The Tangled Fire of William Faulkner. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954.

_____. William Faulkner. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1959.

Rice, Philip Blair. "Faulkner's Crucifixion," The Kenyon Review, XVI, Number 4 (Autumn, 1954), 661-670.

Robb, Mary Cooper. William Faulkner. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1957.

Scott, Nathan A. Jr. (ed.) The Climate of Faith in Modern Literature. New York: The Seabury Press, 1964.

_____. Modern Literature and the Religious Frontier. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958.

_____. (ed.). The Tragic Vision and the Christian Faith. New York: Association Press, 1957.

Strandberg, Victor. "Faulkner's Poor Parson and the Technique of Inversion," The Sewanee Review, LXXIII, Number 2 (Spring, 1965), 181-190.

Swiggart, Peter. "Moral and Temporal Order in The Sound and the Fury," The Sewanee Review, LXI, Number 2, (Spring, 1953), 221-237.

_____. "Two Faulkner Critics," The Sewanee Review, LXII, Number 4 (Autumn, 1954), 696-705.

Tate, Allen. "William Faulkner 1897-1962," The Sewanee Review, LXXI, Number 1 (Winter, 1963), 160-164.

Tillich, Paul. The Protestant Era. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (abridged edition), 1948.

_____. Systematic Theology. Volume II. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957.

Warren, Robert Penn. "Faulkner: The South and the Negro,"
The Southern Review, I (New Series), Number 3,
July, 1965, 501-529.

Wilder, Amos. N. Theology and Modern Literature.
Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958.